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WORLD CONFERENCE ON FAITH AND ORDER

AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE

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Dr. Douglas Horton, D.D. (Congregational-Christian Churches)	287 Fourth Avenue, New York
Prof. Walter M. Horton, D.D. (Congregational-Christian Churches)	Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin, Ohio
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Rev. Leicester C. Lewis, S.T.D. (Protestant Episcopal Church)	7737 St. Martin's Lane, Philadelphia, Pa.

AMERICAN COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER - Notes on the meeting held by the Committee in New York, May 31 and June 1, 1940. - by B.R.Lacy, Jr.

At the conclusion of our meeting something was said about my writing a report on this meeting. Unfortunately, this was delayed so long after the meeting, and from such fragmentary notes, that I am afraid that there will be many discrepancies.

The papers of Dr. Easton on "The Church of the New Testament," and Dr. Cadbury on "The Informality of Early Christianity," of Dr. Craig on "God and the Church," appear to have been discussed together. The discussion, however, centered largely around Dr. Easton's paper, and was opened by Dr. Cadbury. He made certain strictures upon the categories of disciples in a limited sense and in a general sense, advancing the idea that the disciples were not always the followers of one Rabbi, and felt that Dr. Easton's special emphasis upon the intimate group was too great. In this he seemed to have been followed somewhat later by Dr. Rawls, who raised the question of the "disciples" being interpreted according to Jewish custom. He would see the Twelve, the Seventy and other men who did not <u>always</u> attend Him. Dr. Easton replied that Mark also never refers to a disciple except as a close follower, and pointed out that Mark never calls a woman a disciple.

The principal comments on this paper, however, centered around its main feature, i.e., the continuity of the Old Testament and New Testament Church. This Dr. Cadbury thought was overdrawn by Dr. Easton. He pointed out that the "Israel of God", "Dispersion,"

et cetera, are figures of speech which can't be pressed too far. He added that the New Testament Christians were conscious of newness of life in the Church. He didn't deny the continuity but would not underline it as heavily as the paper did, feeling rather that novelty should be emphasized. He pointed out that there was more of revolution and opposition and less of evolution in Paul's contrast of the old with the new. In this Dr. Ravl to a measure agreed, emphasizing that the creative personality of Jesus had not been taken sufficiently into account. Something new and different had happened, not simply a new teacher but God Himself at work in Christ. He added that we can't argue from the Rabbis with their disciples to Jesus and His disciples.

Others raised the question whether the elder of the New Testament is a continuation of that of the Old, and as to whether James and the elders constituted a Sanhedrin. This led to the question of the interchangeability of συναγωγή and ἐκκλησία. Another aspect of the continuity brought out is that of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament being related to the prophetic spirit and spiritual power of the Old Testament, it ~~being~~ having been pointed out by some one that there is a continuity of Spirit with the Old Testament Church as there is with the eldership and organization. It was perhaps in this connection that Dr. Richards pointed out the difference between Propheticism and Judaism, speaking of the way in which the Prophets were always opposed by all except the Remnant.

Dr. Latourette also expressed the fact that the New

Testament was a new institution but posed this question, "How did this new thing come to be?"

After Dr. Horton read his paper on "The Kingdom of God and the Church" which he handled from the ~~theoretical~~ theological point of view rather than from the historical, Dr. Latourette and Dr. Richards seem to have opened that discussion by asking the question, "When was civilization more Christian than now?" and received the reply, "The thirteenth century was a more integrated Christian era." This led to some discussion from which apparently no clear conclusion was drawn and raised the question in at least one mind as to whether Dr. Horton was not emphasizing the power of the Church rather than the Christian spirit. The paper also led to such questions as "What are the dangers presented by the Committees on Social and Moral welfare in the various denominations,"and as to whether the stressing of the spirituality of the Church will foster the ecumenical movement. Dr. Horton stressed the Ionian movement whereby the needs of Scotland in its housing efforts, et cetera, are faced and considered in the light of St. Colomba and of Scotch history. Thus the past and the present combine to work for the good of the future. There must be a vivid consciousness of contemporary needs with a clear idea of the value of spiritual things in the past in order to live today and prepare for the future.

After Dr. Wahlstrom's paper, "The Sense in Which the New Testament is Normative for the Doctrine of the Church," Dr. Horton first brought out the Edinburgh distinction of the Word,

1. The Living Word; 2, The Written Word; 3, (Barth) The Preached Word Today. The remainder of the discussion seems to have centered around V. 5b, "To elevate certain parts of Scripture, as for instance, the words of Jesus, above other parts, opens the way for subjectivism." Dr. Craig objects to "subjectivism" being applied to one part of the paper, when according to Dr. Craig subjectivism appears in other parts of the paper. Our apprehension of the Word involves subjectivism. ¶ Dr. Carver would change the phrase, "The Bible is History," on page 2, to "the Bible contains history," and making the redemptive act <u>in re</u> Abraham, the cue to Genesis, ~~but~~ he traced the idea of national redemption through Exodus on, showing that the Prophets was the spiritual church which would include all peoples in its redemptive act, but suggested that the redemptive creative work ~~of~~ is the cue to what is normative and is the unifying element. In the New Testament Christ becomes the Redeemer and our redemption centers in Him. Dr. Horton pointed out that we do elevate certain parts of Scripture, underlining the chain of mighty acts which reveal God's redemption, especially those depicting and quoting Christ. Dr. Wahlstrom admitted that V. 5b was badly stated and accepted Carver's and Horton's statements. Dr. Cadbury objected to the presupposition that the Bible has unity, claiming that those who assume there is a unity are subjective, to which Dr. Branscomb added that the Scripture has meaning as a whole, apparently substituting "meaning" for "unity," to which Dr. Letcher added, "It has unity and why not say so." Dr. Rawl~~s~~ insisted that the supreme deed of God (reconciling the ~~old~~ WORLD through Christ) is the Word.

Principal Davidson read Dr. McKenzie's paper, "The Sense in Which the New Testament is Normative for the Doctrine of the Church." Dr. McKenzie's position, which was interpreted as making the desire of Jesus the norm, brought forth some discussion which centered around the general contention of a few who spoke, that we have no knowledge of what Jesus desired and therefore we must say that the New Testament is no norm. It was unfortunate that Dr. McKenzie was not present to take part himself in the discussion of his paper. Dr. Davidson replied that you can find out an approximation of his mind by examining what his disciples did and taught.

I regret that my engagements immediately following the Conference did not permit me to write out these impressions when they were fresher upon me. I realize that my notes and memory are exceedingly faulty and that I may have in many cases misinterpreted the trend of these remarks. They may serve, however, to refresh the minds of some.

THE AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

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"The significance of Dissent in the Life of the Church and for the Doctrine of the Church." *

By
Professor Frederick W. Loetscher, D.D.
Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J.

The two aspects of the theme assigned us might be regarded from some points of view as of equal or at least coordinate importance. But as the time at our disposal hardly warrants our trying to discuss both of them, we shall take the liberty of choosing for special treatment the one that is the more vitally related to our corporate task,- the significance of dissent for the doctrine of the Church. It is our hope that in the sequel this procedure will be found to have thrown a considerable amount of light on the other phase of the topic; for after all, it is the influence of dissent in shaping the doctrine of the Church that most adequately interprets for us the significance of dissent in the life of the Church.

Another introductory remark may be in order. We shall pay little attention to the difference in the forms in which dissent has found expression, but shall take the term in its most general sense to include not only separation from an established church - the common usage of the word in the British Isles - but also heresy, schism, and sectarianism, as well as the less extreme developments in nonconformity, whether in doctrine, polity, ritual, or life.

With this understanding, we shall try to indicate the significance of dissent for the doctrine of the Church by presenting a few historical illustrations of a fairly typical character.

Among early Christian dissenters the foremost place of honor and influence belongs to the Apostle Paul. Once for all he made it plain that the followers of Jesus were not a mere sect of carnally minded Jews, and in developing his evangelical ideas against his Judaistic opponents he proclaimed principles

*A paper prepared for the meeting of the Committee to be held in New York City on November 15 and 16, 1940.

of ecclesiology that were destined time and again in the subsequent centuries to reveal their vitalizing and transforming power. Particularly significant has been his teaching concerning the Church as the body of true believers, the congregation of the called, the communion of the saints, the number of the elect. But to his own generation his most impressive claim was no doubt that in regard to the universality of the Gospel and the ecumenical nature of the Church. It may, indeed, be said that no greater revolution in the history of the world has ever been accomplished than that by which he cut Christianity loose from Judaism and widened the Church to the dimensions of the human race.

In the rise of the Old Catholic Church during the last quarter of the second century we have another evidence of the significance of dissent in shaping the doctrine of the Church. Montanism and Gnosticism had for some time been perplexing ecclesiastical leaders and evoking synodical censures. Montanus was discredited because of his hyper-spiritualism - he regarded himself as the inspired organ of the promised Paraclete - and also because of his visionary millenarianism, his zeal against the growing laxity of the penitential discipline, and his advocacy of the universal priesthood of believers. Gnosticism had long been, and in its revived form as Manichaeism it long continued to be, a still more serious menace to evangelical Christianity. One may question Harnack's verdict that this movement produced the most serious crisis the Church has ever had to face; but his main thesis is incontrovertible: Gnosticism, as an acute secularization or Hellenization of the Gospel threatened to dissolve Christianity in the prevalent syncretism. It was chiefly against Montanism and Gnosticism that the Church - that is, the majority party in the Church - erected those three norms that have been salient traits of historic Catholicism ever since: the closed canon of the New Testament; the Apostles' Creed as the rule of faith; and episcopal succession as the channel for, and the guarantee of, the authentic Christian tradition. The monarchical episcopate, no doubt, existed here and there in the Apostolic Age; in any event it is well attested for Asia Minor by

the Ignatian Epistles early in the second century. But in these documents the bishops are as yet only congregational, not diocesan, officers; they are still regarded as of equal rank; and in theory they are successors, not of the Apostles, but of Christ himself. In Irenaeus and the other Anti-Gnostic Fathers, however, the bishops have jurisdiction over groups of local churches; they constitute a graded hierarchy; and, as Tertullian says, "having been appointed to their episcopal places by the Apostles," they are "transmitters of the Apostolic seed." By this time, too, the radical change in the conception of the ministry itself had taken place: he whose chief functions had been those of preacher, pastor, and leader in public worship had become a priest, a member of a sacerdotal order, who in addition to spiritual oblations of praise and thanksgivings now used the sacramental elements as a sin-offering for the people.

The Trinitarian and Christological controversies of the fourth and the following centuries led to the formation of the fundamental dogmas concerning the Godhead and the Person of Christ, and gave rise to many heretical and schismatic bodies, some of which have maintained their dissent to this day. Broadly speaking, however, these controversies had relatively little effect in the realm of ecclesiology. But it was quite otherwise with Donatism and Pelagianism. For it was chiefly in connection with these two issues that Augustine, the most creative thinker of Western Christendom, set forth the ideas which have justified both the Roman Catholics in regarding him as the real founder of their doctrine of the Church and the Protestants in claiming him as the pioneer and champion of their own evangelical critique of the papal hierarchy. Donatism was the most important of the many schisms occasioned by the discipline of the lapsed during the period of the persecutions by the Roman government. The Donatists were ecclesiastical purists who made the efficacious administration of the sacraments depend on the personal holiness of the clergy. Against this subjective and spiritualistic conception of the Church, Augustine fashioned his objective and realistic theory; defining the four primary attributes of the Church as unity,

holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity, and adding to these, as necessary complements, infallibility, indispensability, and permanence. To be sure, his reasoning was not always self-consistent, especially as regards baptism, ordination, and the eucharist. But in general, his Anti-Donatist treatises and epistles virtually equated the empirical Catholic Church with the Kingdom of God, and maintained its superiority to the State by requiring all secular rulers to serve the Church even to the extent, if deemed necessary by the hierarchy, of using force to suppress idolatry, heresies, and schisms. But in his Anti-Pelagian works we have a quite different Augustine. He here matures those characteristic doctrines of sin and grace that give us our best insight into his own religious life with its ever increasing dependence on God. Here he enunciates principles which, had he fully carried them out, would have undermined and subverted the Catholicism advocated against the Donatists. This applies especially to his teaching on the predestination of the saints and the gift of perseverance. For if salvation depends ultimately upon the election of grace, it may well be, as Augustine maintained, that the true Church cannot be anything but the number of the elect, and that the elect may be found outside as well as inside the Catholic Church, inasmuch as saving grace need not be bound to external means or institutions. These were ideas destined to reveal their molding influence time and again in such medieval opponents of the papacy as Gottschalk, Marsiglius, Occam, Wyclif, Huss, and Wessel Gansfort, and most of all in the Reformers of the sixteenth century.

With respect to the greatest schism in the history of the Church - that which divided Eastern from Western Christendom - it is useless to raise the question as to which is to be regarded as the dissenting body: the former has ever boasted of its orthodoxy and the latter of its catholicity. Many were the tendencies that early drew them apart, and many are the influences that perpetuate their separation. So far as ecclesiology is concerned, the outstanding fact in the Western Church is the transformation of the papal power into a theocracy in which the pope functions as the vicar of Christ and the vicegerent of God. What

this means for the doctrine concerning the Church may be inferred from the astounding assertion in Boniface's Bull Unam Sanctam (1302) that subjection to the Roman pontiff is a necessary condition of salvation for every creature. Naturally, this aggrandizement of the Apostolic See called forth many critics and opponents. We mention the Cathari, the Albigenses, the Beguines and Beghards, the Flagellants, the Waldenses, the German mystics, and the better sort of humanists both north and south of the Alps. More important still, from the standpoint of the growing nationalism that arose in the wake of the Crusades, were the Italian and French publicists who championed the independence of the State in all temporal and secular affairs. As regards the monastic orders of the Middle Ages, it must be conceded that ever and again they were the chief embodiment of the dynamic principle of the Gospel and as such the very saviors of the papacy from the perils of a static and decadent institutionalism. But earnestly as each newly founded society might strive to purify the moral life of the time, its very success as the "Church out of the world" made it the chief promoter of the "Church in the world" and exposed it in turn to the ever recurring secularization. As a matter of fact, neither the anti-papal sects we have named nor the jurisconsults nor even the best of the monastic leaders could furnish the one thing needful - a more truly evangelical doctrine of the Church. It was reserved for the Reformers to make this contribution.

Taken as a whole, Protestantism is the most impressive illustration of the significance of dissent for the doctrine of the Church. In their opposition to Roman Catholicism the Reformers stood for three fundamental principles, every one of which had an important bearing on their ecclesiology. The first was the supremacy of Scripture over tradition. Though the Lutherans, the Reformed, and the more radical dissenters applied this principle with varying degrees of thoroughness, they all based upon it their rejection of the papacy, transubstantiation, the sacrifice of the mass, works of supererogaton, indulgences, purgatory, monasticism, and many rites and ceremonies which they regarded as

anti-Scriptural. The second principle, often called the material principle of the Reformation, was justification by faith alone, "the chief article," as the Lutheran Formula of Concord calls it, "in tota doctrina Christiana"; though the Reformed confessions rather give this honor to the doctrine of election by free grace through faith unto salvation. But in either case we have a church-building principle that by reason of its fresh vindication of the divine sovereignty and initiative in redemption was destined to make the idea of the Kingdom of God a distinctive trait of the Reformation. And the third principle was that of the priesthood of all believers. We say nothing of its importance as the source of religious and civil liberty; but we emphasize its significance for the doctrine of the Church. On the one hand, it denied the sacerdotal character of the Christian ministry, except in a purely spiritual sense; and on the other, it admitted the laity to a share in the government and administration of church affairs.

We cannot dwell upon the varied attempts which the early Protestant leaders made to solve the agelong problem of the relation of Church and State. Suffice it to say that whether they retained or remodelled the episcopal hierarchy, as in England and Scandinavia; or entrusted the supreme ecclesiastical authority to the secular rulers, as in the Lutheran Churches of Germany; or established a presbyterian polity, on the basis of the parity of the ministry, lay elders, and a representative synod, as in the lands where the Reformed Churches became dominant; or organized self-governing congregations for voluntary association with one another, as did the more radical dissenters both on the continent of Europe and in England, - they all had much to endure at the hands of the civil power even in the administration of purely spiritual affairs. But thanks to the more realistic Calvinists, especially the Presbyterians, the Baptists, and the Independents, much was accomplished in making the community of the faithful both autonomous and self-sufficient in the religious sphere.

From what has been said it is evident that "dissent" is a relative and rather flexible term. But nowhere is this fact more obvious than in the post-

Reformation history of the Church. The divisive principle inherent in Protestantism led quite naturally not only to the development of diverse doctrinal tendencies and schools of theological opinion, as with the Anti-Trinitarians and the Arminians, but also to the formation of countless ecclesiastical bodies whether of the more sectarian or the more churchly type. We cannot deal with these groups separately or in detail. It must suffice to say that they have much in common as regards their significance for the doctrine of the Church. Quite generally they put emphasis on studying and preaching the Bible, the private right of interpretation and judgment, the value of individual religious experience, simplicity and spirituality of public worship, and, above all, the more perfect sanctification of the professing Christians and the separation of the Church from the world. In many instances these new organizations clearly represented a religion of the underprivileged that found a characteristic expression in an intense emotionalism, as in the Pietists, Moravians, and Methodists, and in more or less fantastic millenial hopes, as in the Anabaptists and the Fifth Monarchy Men. Now and then, among the radicals on the extreme left, the fundamental Protestant principle of the authority of the Bible was discarded in favor of the so-called "inner light"; though most of the spiritualistic mystics had their own assortment of Scriptural texts by which to commend their views. In general, they regarded the sacraments as empty ceremonies and showed no proper appreciation of the institutional life of the Church. The Anabaptist movement was really another denominational expression of the old Montanistic-Donatistic demand that the empirical Church must be a congregation of converted individuals and that therefore there is no ground for the baptism of infants. Thoroughgoing spiritualism, as we find it in the Quakers of the second and later generations, involves an endless segmentation that quite loses sight of the Church as an objective reality, even in the form of an independent local congregation. Nor is the phenomenon strange in modern, any more than in medieval and ancient church history, that a fervid mystic easily becomes a cold rationalist. Sociniamism and Deism will often prove to be the only

illumination that the "inner light" can yield.

But in England "dissent" is not to be limited to the nonconforming groups that have grown into separate denominations. For even within the Anglican Establishment there are radically different views as to the nature of the Church. So far as the official formulary is concerned, the nineteenth of the Thirty-nine Articles declares: "The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached and the sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's ordinances." Both the Lutherans and the Reformed could accept this definition, and in general it may be said that the anthropology and soteriology of the Articles are Augustinian or Lutheran, while the doctrine of the Supper is moderately Calvinistic. But under the Stuarts the diverging tendencies which the Elizabethan settlement had tried to hold in equilibrium found expression in the sharply differentiated High and Low Church parties. The former emphasized the idea of apostolic succession in the episcopate as the guarantee of the historic continuity and the doctrinal purity of the Church; the latter was more Protestant in spirit and strove to carry the Reformation further than it had been permitted to go during the reign of Elizabeth. In theology, the High Church party was largely Arminian, and the Low Church party Calvinistic. In the eighteenth century the Wesleyan revival practically made Low Churchmanship synonymous with Evangelicalism, while the Oxford or Tractarian Movement, beginning in 1833, developed a marked anti-Protestant tendency in the High Church party. The Low Churchman makes little of sacerdotalism but much of the personal experience of faith in Christ. The difference between him and most other Protestants consists chiefly in his fondness for the Prayer Book and in his conception of the necessity of episcopal ordination for the minister. The High Church party of today, at least in its most advanced Neo-Anglican form, may be said to stand for Roman Catholicism minus the papacy. It lays stress on the traditional seven sacraments, especially the mass and extreme unction, and shows a keen interest in restoring, as far as possible, auricular confession and the invocation of the saints,

together with many of the details of the medieval ritual, including images, crucifixes, holy water, mass bells, and the like. And beside the High and the Low there is the Broad Church party, representing the rationalistic tendencies in modern British Protestantism. It is latitudinarian enough to embrace not only Trinitarians, but also Arians, Socinians, and Modernists of every sort, including thoroughgoing sceptics. Some of its members seem to attach no more religious significance to the Church than to a philosophic society or social club.

In no country and in no period of its long history has Christianity presented a more varied, a more Protean, form than in America, this paradise of the religious dissenter and sectarian. Our countless denominations reflect the manifold sources of our national life, with their diverse political, social, and ecclesiastical conditions in the Old World, and in Church as in State the frontiersman with his rugged individualism and love of independence has played a role of special importance, particularly in the promotion of principles of representative government. Our concern is only with the significance of dissent for the doctrine of the Church, and here, too, only a summary statement is possible.

In the first or Puritan period of American Christianity, the theocratic conception of the Church was virtually universal throughout the colonies. The sovereignty of God was the regnant idea and His will was to be learned from the Scriptures conceived as essentially a collection of sacred oracles. But the very Biblicism led to a one-sided individualism which, though it fostered the spirit of liberty and eventually won the fight for religious toleration, never did full justice to the social demands of the Gospel or the corporate life of the Church. The second or Pietistic period, culminating in the Great Awakening, even intensified this excessive individualism, though it would be ungenerous not to allude to the beneficent results of the revival in the evangelistic, missionary, and educational enterprises of most of the Churches. But the representation of the "hot gospeller", that a conversion to be genuine must be sudden and catastrophic, led logically to a view of the relation of the Christian family to the Church

that was bound to exert a baleful influence, as Horace Bushnell later so convincingly showed, on religious instruction in the home. The status of children as regards church membership was a question that gave rise to much serious controversy. After the colonies achieved their independence our Churches one by one adapted themselves to the new conditions by organizing themselves on a national basis under the constitutional guarantee that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." In this third and last period American Christianity has been marked, in general, by its more adequate appreciation of the historic past as a heritage that ought to have valuable lessons for the worship and work of all our denominations, and especially by its zeal in behalf of the social applications of the Gospel, and by its endeavors to secure the effective cooperation and even the organic union of the Churches. Our whole ecclesiastical history thus emphasizes the fact that we as American Christians have special reasons for undertaking a fresh study of that clause of the ancient creed that declares: "I believe in .... the holy Catholic Church."

THE AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

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"The Relation of the Church and the Environment: The Effect of Environment upon the Life and Forms and upon the Concept of the Church, as Illustrated today in Typical Areas." * By Professor Kenneth Scott Latourette, Ph.D., Yale University, New Haven, Conn.

In past ages environment has had a profound effect upon the life, forms, and concept of the Church. This must be obvious to every student of the history of the Church. The pre-Christian Jewish conviction of a chosen people, an Israel of God, was appropriated by the Christians and left its indelible impress. The synagogue was potent in shaping the early Church, even though some of the details of that influence escape us and are debatable. Greek thought left its impress upon the theology of the Church. The territorial episcopate which has been so striking a feature of most of organized Christianity through the ages took form under the influence of the administrative system of the Roman Empire. Some of the historic and persistent divisions in the Church reflect the sectional differences of that Empire -- among them the Coptic Church of Egypt, the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and the Roman Catholic Church. In their temper the Eastern Orthodox Churches are in part the product of the situation in which they developed. Their subordination to the state and their quietism with their emphasis upon the liturgy and their minimum of activism seem to hark back to the continuing power of the state in the eastern part of the Roman Empire and to the fact that, in being adopted by the state, the Church was assumed to have something of the status which pre-Christian cults had had, namely, that of being ancillary to the state and of being controlled by it. Just as obviously, the Roman Catholic Church partly embodied the temper and reflected the conditions in the western part of the Empire. It incorporated the practical administrative gifts and the imperial tradition of Rome. The fact that the collapse of the Empire in the West left it early the bulwark of civilization made possible the assumption of more political and social functions than was

* A paper prepared for the meeting of the Committee to be held in the fall of 1940.

feasible for the Eastern Orthodox Church and is partly responsible for its activism and, for that matter, for the activism of all Western Christianity, including Protestantism. The absolute monarchies of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries placed their stamp upon the Churches. The Gallicanism of the French Church, the existence and many of the characteristics of the Church of England, the creation and several of the features of the Church of Sweden, and the further shackling of the Church in Russia through the substitution of the Holy Synod for the patriarchate are only some of the better known effects.

It is not, however, with these earlier results of the environment that this paper must be chiefly concerned. It is, rather, with the consequences of the more recent settings of the Church that we must deal. Space is lacking to mention all of these. We must content ourselves with the enumeration of a few of them selected, somewhat at random, from various parts of the world.

In Europe in the nineteenth century the scepticism and anti-clericalism which contributed to the separation of Church and state reinforced the ultramontanism of the Roman Catholic Church.

Protestantism has been relatively more prominent in the world scene in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries than previously. This fact is to be ascribed in part to the outstanding place which the predominantly Protestant Anglo-Saxon peoples, the British and Americans, had in the life of that period. Why these peoples achieved this position we are not here attempting to discover. That question would lead us into the heart of an important but necessarily long discussion of the effect of Protestantism, and especially of the types of Protestantism typical of Anglo-Saxon peoples.

The Christianity of the United States is unique. Never in any other land have so many varieties of the faith been represented. Most of the major branches of the Church which exist in Europe and Asia are present and to these have been added others of indigenous origin. This is due partly to the tremendous immigration from many different peoples, particularly in the nineteenth century. It is also in

part from the legal tolerance and the separation of Church and state which have characterized the national period. In this diversity, the several Churches are largely on a basis of equality. No one has the pre-eminence. Anglican, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, which in their home lands have enjoyed social as well as legal preference, in the United States must rub shoulders with one another and with other branches of the Church and must fend for themselves. This has made for two contrary tendencies, one a conservative heightening of confessional consciousness and particularism, and the other, probably gaining, the interpenetration of one Church by another and a movement toward a common national Christianity. It has also made for co-operation. It is no accident that so much of the initiative and leadership of the ecumenical movement is coming from the United States. Although no one branch of the Church has legal preference or even unofficial pre-eminence in the United States, a strain of Protestantism represented by several denominations has had a leading part in shaping the nation and is still relatively more prominent than on the Continent of Europe or even than in Great Britain.

This arises out of the nature of some of the early settlements in the Thirteen Colonies. The fact that these were founded by religious radicals seeking haven gave to the left wing of Protestantism a leadership and a prestige which thus far it has largely maintained. The new environment with its opportunity for a fresh beginning combined with the presence of this radical Protestantism encouraged the emergence of new denominations, some of which tended to ignore historical developments in the Old World. It is largely because of this circumstance that such denominations as the Disciples of Christ and the Christians and the still less conventional groups, the Mormons and the Christian Scientists, had their birth in the United States. It is more than a coincidence that the latter two had founders of New England stock.

Canada presents an ecclesiastical picture which differs from that of the United States. Here the radical Protestant elements so outstanding in the great republic to the south are not so prominent. The era of religious persecution in

Europe had largely passed before Protestant settlement of Canada began. In some respects, therefore, the Protestantism of Canada has been more conventional. No new denominations of consequence have emerged -- with one important and significant exception. That exception is the United Church. The United Church is a result primarily of the frontier. Conditions in the Canadian West were chiefly responsible for bringing it into being. It is important, too, to note the effect of the Canadian environment upon the Roman Catholic Church. That Church, because of the peculiar history of the Dominion, has become in part the symbol and the expression of French Canadian nationalism. In spirit it is, therefore, especially in the Province of Quebec, more conservative and arrogant than in the United States.

In Latin America the temper of the Roman Catholic Church is partly determined by its past history in that area. Under the Spanish and Portuguese colonial regimes the Church was closely controlled by the state. Bishops took office only on nomination of the Crown. At least in the Spanish possessions, no missionary or priest could come to the colonies except with the consent of the Crown. The support of missionaries in theory was from the royal chest. Christianity had been accepted passively by the Indians as the faith of their masters. Most of the higher clergy were born in Spain, Only slowly were those of Indian or Mestizo blood admitted even to the lower ranks of the clergy. In the close stratification of society, the Indians, who constituted the majority, were usually illiterate and superstitious. When the colonies achieved their political independence, each of the successor nations strove to perpetuate the same kind of control of the Church which had been exercised by the Crown. In this they were more or less successful, in degrees varying with the country. The struggle helped to bring the Church into politics. In some countries, notably in Mexico, the Church became a bulwark of the privileges of the conservative upper classes as against the demands of the lower orders for greater opportunity. One of the first effects of independence was to deprive the Church of its European-born leadership. Missions on the frontiers suffered. The secular clergy, now American-born, were inferior morally to the regulars, largely

European-born, in whose hands were most of the missions. Because Spanish churchmen felt that if help were to come at all from Europe they still should have first voice in Latin American affairs. Rome found great difficulty in acting directly to remedy conditions. The result is Latin American Roman Catholicism -- politically minded, bigotted, superstitous, holding the nominal allegiance but seldom the sincere devotion of the upper classes, with clergy of an inferior character. It is significant that in contrast with the Roman Catholic Church in the United States and Canada, this Latin American Roman Catholicism has been the source of almost no original movements to carry the faith to other lands.

Confronted in Latin America and the Philippines with the dominant Roman Catholic Church which scornfully contrasts its outward unity with their divisions, Protestants in these lands have tended to unite. The effect has been particularly notable in the countries in which Protestants are numerically strong, Brazil, Mexico, and the Philippines.

In Japan the urge to nationalism hastened the independence of the larger Protestant denominations from foreign control and subsidy. Latterly it has led some Protestants to join in the rites at the national shrines. Witness a Methodist bishop announcing at a great national shrine the plans for an evangelistic campaign. Nationalism has led some Japanese to declare that Japan can improve the Christianity which has come to her from other lands.

In China the traditional absence of anything corresponding to the Church has retarded the development of a church consciousness among the Chinese Protestant Christians. The conception inculcated by Confucianism that a religion is of value chiefly as it makes for the collective social salvation of the Empire has led to the stressing by many of the educated, both Chinese and missionaries, in their presentation of Christianity and in the programs of the churches, of the reform of society and the strengthening of the nation here and now. By an interesting contrast, the Buddhist and Taoism strains in Chinese religion, which emphasize the saving of the individual for a future life of bliss, have pre-conditioned some Christians to make

much of that part of their faith. The first trend has been reinforced by the "social gospel" elements in Western Protestantism, the latter by the Fundamentalist strains.

In a number of lands Christianity tends to conform to class and race divisions. In Burma it is numerically strongest among the Karens. In the Netherlands East Indies there is a strong Batak Church. In the Near East each of the Churches represents a particular national or communal group. In Madagascar Protestant Christianity has had its chief stronghold among the dominant Hova. We are all aware how, in the United States, denominations are grouped by the European antecedents of the population, by class lines, and by race.

One of the lands in which the influence of class upon the Church is the most marked is India. Here the traditional stratification of society through caste has had striking results. Christians, and especially Protestant Christians, are overwhelmingly from the outcastes. The social groupings which exist even among the outcastes tend to reproduce themselves in the Churches. One denomination draws from one and another from some other. To be sure, missionaries have often struggled against the perpetuation of caste in the Church and sometimes with partial success. Yet the divisions persist, even though weakened.

In giving these examples of the effect of the environment upon the Church it may seem as though the latter were entirely the product of its milieu, past and present. We need to remind ourselves, however, that there has been and is within the Church a continuing life force which also affects the environment. Again and again the latter has been molded decisively by it. That, however, is another story.

THE AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

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The Informality of Early Christianity *

By
Professor Henry J. Cadbury, Ph.D.
Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Mass.

One feature of the earliest associations of Christians which it is most difficult to realize is their informality. The tendency to read our later developments backward into the past is natural, and can be cured only by resolutely challenging the unconscious assumptions of our less inchoate age.

Probably the New Testament itself shows signs of attributing present traits to the past. The Book of Acts as a history of the Church no doubt in places impresses the more developed view of the author upon the past; or, at least, a different point of view. Even the Gospels, when they put "church" into Jesus' mouth, or interpret John's baptism in the perspective of church usage, or collect sayings of Jesus to the Twelve or to the Seventy in the spirit of the later Christian mission, are assuming anachronistically the forms of thought, speech and action of the intervening period. More conscious fathering of the present on the past appears in the Pastoral Epistles and the Didache (the latter with perhaps a counter tendency to archaize or primitivize). The ancients were less on guard against this fallacy than are those moderns who have been taught to regard all history as evolutionary. But in spite of this warning recognized in other areas, in the area of the sacred instituion of the Church the usual informality of beginnings is often overlooked by modern churchmen.

Names. The currency of a suitable name for a group of persons is a mark of distinctiveness. The lack of a nomenclature goes hand in hand with a lack of clear demarcation from other persons. Both for the group as a whole and for the individual as belonging to it the earliest Christians show variety of phrase rather than uniformity, and here as elsewhere variety indicates a lack

* A paper prepared for the meeting of the Committee in New York on Mary 31st and June 1st, 1940.

of settled or formal crystallization. Some kind of designation was needed in the most incipient stage, but many of the terms used in the New Testament seem to have been tentative, alternative and short-lived.

Membership. To our organization-conscious age it seems absurd to suggest that there was ever any obscurity about whether or not there was a definite thing one belonged to and whether or not a given person belonged to it. But I believe membership in the usual modern sense was not a concept of the early Church. Belonging was doubtless much more to a supernatural person than to a church. The fellowship was a by-product of similar individual commitments, ideas and experiences. But though similar they would be far from indentical. Rigid edges would not exist and the transition in and out would be gradual and often unnoticed. No census would be really possible and there would be no reason to make one. It would be difficult to name any simple test of inclusion. Most Christians were baptized, but baptism - I state my conviction, without arguing it - was not a rite of initiation into the Church. It had to do with the individual's relation to Christ and to what God and Christ were thought to expect of him, and what he expected of them. No doubt most Christians would assent to the words "Jesus Lord" and dissent from the words "Jesus anathema," but this was no creed, or test, or "basis." It is difficult to believe that even in connection with the support of its "poorer members" the early Christians were in the habit of "keeping a roll" (Scott, Validity of the Gospel Record, p. 111). Some of the least organized modern movements probably supply the best parallels to the truly primitive Christian movement. In the Oxford Group, as I understand it, you neither apply for membership nor resign it. There is no admission and no dropping of members. For its first 85 years Quakerism neither took in members nor listed them; they did not count members even locally nor did they have any way of identifying members except as persons who "went under the name" of Quakers.

Query: Could you Baptism be back sign of relation to Christ & initiation?

Leadership. Here too spontaneity, variety and informality were, by present standards, extreme. When Paul describes from the divine side the unity of the spirit and the diversity of gifts, he implies from the human side a minimum of interference or arrangement. What modern scholars call charismatic when speaking theologically they would call functional when speaking sociologically. The terminology for the Christian leadership is varied from the first, and even when definite terms arise, like presbyter and bishop, they are sometimes identical, sometimes hierarchical, and sometimes literally descriptive. Streeter's Primitive Church did well to suggest that probably more than one kind of organization was "primitive." But just as the textual critics tell us that often behind variants the original text had no words at all, so often behind variant forms of church usage or organization there may have been an absence of form or usage altogether. As has been recently said by Canon Raven, the Church was organic rather than organized.

Worship. I Corinthians 14 gives an impression of worship of a highly spontaneous character. There were habitual types of vocal participation, but no habitual order, proportion, or participants. Apparently there was no program of service and no presiding officer (humanly speaking) to "conduct" the service. The only Pauline word that could be translated "presiding" (so Spencer at I Thess. 5:12; cf. I Cor. 14:16 "layman"!) probably means "care for" or "help", both there and elsewhere (Rom. 12:8 and the Pastorals). Paul's remedy for the disorder in worship was not an order of worship or appointed participants. He evidently anticipated continuance of democratic, unprogrammed, spontaneous expression. What he urged was more self-criticism, intelligence and restraint; not a moderator, but moderation on the part of men and women generally. Paul's references to the oral participation of women (I Corinthians 11:5 and 14:34), if not contradictory are obscure. So is the behavior of Diotrephes criticized in 3 John. But nowhere in the New Testament do I find any suggestion that individuals who were selected for any church duty took over the bulk of the oral aspect of worship, or monopolized the baptizing or the breaking of bread.

particular laying of ordination.

The Doctrine of the Church disclosed in the New Testament is as informal as the practice. The Pauline Epistles have some eloquent things to say about this as about other features of the new faith. But in no area is Paul really formulating a doctrine; the very variety of his expression, and its relation to his temporary context, confirm that. A painstaking study can be made of what his words on any subject would imply if taken as part of a system of thought. With other New Testament writings they imply holiness, authority, unity, etc., for the group. Our concern here is to indicate not what was the content of the doctrine, but that it is nuclear and tentative; illustrations, rather than definitions.

Causes leading to formulation and formality were operative from early times. Older and more organized groups set the pattern for new ones. Evidently terms like ecclesia, brother, elder (presbyter), came from older communities, religious or secular, Jewish or Gentile. Few new terms were invented, e.g., Christian. Probably the aspects of Christian life more substantial than terminology were also partly imitated, or inherited. If the name disciple was inherited from before the crucifixion, so no doubt was the strategic importance of some of those who bore it. Judaism provided both the concept of Scripture and definite Scriptures.

Considerations of inherent convenience and value gave stability to features both old and new. In time the sheer force of habit stereotyped the thought and practice of Christians as applied to the collective side of their religion. Changes were made, due to new needs or new influences, but they were rarely in the direction of greater spontaneity and informality.

Among the most powerful influences differentiating and regimenting Christians would be external pressure, both persecution and "heresy." They would solidify organization or regulate practice and even more they would standardize group consciousness. Negative factors often do more to creat group consciousness than

all positive forces of common experience and feeling. When circles are drawn they are usually drawn to keep others out. Against the Christians it was the persecutors who drew the circle, against the heretics it was the orthodox.

Informality as Normative. The present memorandum is not a plea to make the primitive Church normative for us today. "No form" as norm sounds paradoxical. To recapture all that early informality would probably be impossible, were it desirable. Much might be said in favor of trying to secure some of its fluidity and formlessness for the sake of the present-day advantages. But any one else who claims to use the primitive Church as norm must be aware of what he is rejecting, if he ignores freedom from both form and uniformity. Within New Testament times there was growth or change from decade to decade and even contemporary variety. To select one variety or one period would be arbitrary historically, if otherwise thoroughly justifiable. What features of the Church now extinct were once usual or at least occasional? Probably they are as numerous proportionately as are the terms that were not continued. For the latter I may cite "slave of Jesus Christ," "brotherhood," "Nazarene," "way," etc.; for the former, "working miracles," "baptism for the dead," the "agape", "condemning to Satan", "widows". The less tangible features of the Apostolic age, its own mentality as contrasted with our own assumptions, are so difficult to imagine and to re-present, that we are prone to mark likenesses and imagine continuity since that is the easier process. The historian must see that neglected facts are recalled, no matter how inconvenient they may seem to those who wish to represent primitive Christianity revived.

THE AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

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The Church in the New Testament*

by
Prof. Burton Scott Easton, D. D.
The General Theological Seminary, New York

The Biblical account of the giving of the Law pictures all the Jews in all the world gathered into a single congregation, to which Moses spoke. This usage, which begins in Ex 12.3 and continues throughout the Pentateuch, fixed "Congregation" permanently as a religious title for Israel as a whole: all the Jews in all the world are as closely associated as if they were standing side by side in a single place. And this Congregation is the Congregation of the Lord (Deut 23.2, etc.), created by God. The whole is therefore more than the sum of its parts. Israel is not God's people because the Israelites individually are good men; Israelites enjoy God's favor because they are members of Israel. It is the group that sanctifies, not <u>vice versa</u>.

So lesser groups share something of the quality of the greater. All the Jews in any place form "God's Congregation" there, even though they may never meet together. And an actual assembly for religious purposes is likewise "God's Congregation," its members possessing qualities that they gain as they enter and lose as they depart: a Jew is seriously hampered in the

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*A paper proposed for the meeting of the Committee in New York City, May 31 and June 1, 1940.

Thyli Priests
Priests
Levites
Elders - "Highest of all" Easter

practice of his religion when he cannot meet with other Jews. And, finally, at least one Greek word for "congregation" (συναγωγή) was used for the building or the room in which religious assemblies regularly met.

Thus Israel forms a true "Divine Society," created by God, preserved by God, governed by God. Its laws are His Law. Its officers have been instituted by Him, whether the priests--whose authority in New Testament days had greatly declined--or the elders--whose authority had correspondingly increased. Members of this Society are set apart from the rest of mankind by their dedication to God, a dedication that makes them "holy ones" or "saints." Here "sainthood," of course, must be understood in a religious rather than a moral sense, for that many Jews were far from sainthood as we understand the word was always only too obvious. So to be a saint did not entitle anyone to salvation nor was sainthood lost by sin that did not involve complete apostasy. A Jewish girl was "defiled" if she married a Gentile of the highest character but was not so defiled by marriage with a degraded Jew.

This quasi-ceremonial conception of sainthood led the more liberal Jews to argue that lack of the quality need not bar a man from salvation: certain apocalypses, most notably the Testaments, predict the inclusion of righteous Gentiles in the Kingdom of God. And in New Testament days this hope must have been particularly strong as regards the Gentiles known as "God fearers" or "God worshippers" (Acts 10.2, etc.), who attended the synagogue services regularly, subscribed to Jewish charities, etc. But such a doctrine

could not be proved from the Old Testament, and stricter Jews--as, e.g., in 4 Ezra--denied it outright; if a Gentile wished to inherit God's promises to Israel, he must become an Israelite. And the invitation to enter Israel was at this period--to be distinguished sharply from that after A.D. 70--pressed urgently by missionaries who literally "crossed land and sea to make one proselyte." Their success was not great, for the burden of the Law was impossibly heavy for most non-Jews; but that the effort was made is the important fact.

The obvious similarities between the Jewish conception of the Congregation and the New Testament conception of the Church are of course due to the fact that between Congregation and Church--two nouns identical in all languages at the time--there was no sharp break: to most New Testament writers the continuity of the Church with Israel is a fundamental truth. The woman of Rev 12 is the same woman after the Messiah's ascension as she was before, and the new Gentile converts are simply "the rest of her seed." (v.17). In James, Christians are addressed as "the twelve tribes of the Dispersion." In 1 Peter they are likewise addressed as "the Dispersion," fully entitled to bear the Old Testament titles "a chosen race, a holy nation, God's peculiar possession" (2.9). The Pastoral Epistles count Paul's service of God as in unbroken line from the Jewish service of his ancestors (2 Tim 1.3); and reestablish in the Church the elders of the Congregation, with both title and essential functions unaltered (Tit 1.5; 2 Tim 2.2,

One of most interesting discoveries of late in Church Polity, was discovery of prayer of Hippolytus in earliest ordination prayer, in which elders are said to have been first ordained by Moses.

etc.).

Paul calls the Church directly "the Israel of God" (Gal 6.16) and teaches that the Christians are the true "children of Abraham" (Rom 4.12, etc.). When he addresses, e.g., the Corinthians as "the Church of God which is in Corinth," composed of "saints because of God's call," he uses precisely the language that in his pre-conversion days he might have employed in writing to a Jewish community. The continuity of his thought and terminology is strikingly displayed in his discussion of mixed marriages in 1 Cor 7: his dictum that "the unbelieving husband is made holy in the wife and the unbelieving wife is made holy in the brother" is a mere mechanical reversal of the Jewish dictum that "a Jewish wife is made unholy by a Gentile husband and a Jewish husband is made unholy by a Gentile wife." As Paul cannot possibly mean that an unbeliever will be saved because his wife is a Christian, he is using "holiness" in its old quasi-ceremonial sense, differing only in the higher potency ascribed to the Christian quality. And in Rom 2.14-15 Paul at least approximates the more liberal Jewish hope of salvation for good, although "unholy," men.

The duty of the Congregation-Church to spread its message needs no emphasis.

Turning now to the historical development of the Christian concept, at first sight Jesus may seem to have ignored the whole complex of ideas connected with the word "Church." The word itself

he never used--in the only two places where it appears in his recorded teaching (Mt 16.18; 18.17) it is due to later tradition--and the great mass of his sayings are directed exclusively to the conscience of individuals. Yet all his sayings have as their background his constant conviction that his ministry is not to individuals as such but to members of God's chosen people. We have this explicitly in the statements: "It is not right to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs" (Mk 7.27) and "Go not into any street of the Gentiles...but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 10.5-6), but even more significantly in the words: "For all such things do the Gentiles seek" (Lk 12.30=Mt 6.32); "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them" (Lk 22.25=Mt 20.25=Mk 10.42); "Use not vain repetitions as the Gentiles do" (Mt 6.7) or "If you salute your brethren only...do not even the Gentiles the same?" (Mt 5.47). That higher achievement should be expected from Jews than from Gentiles was to Jesus an axiom.

Past question the accounts of the Syro-Phoenician woman and the centurion of Capernaum show that Jesus agreed with the view that salvation was not confined to Israel, just as he agreed with all thinking Jews that to be an Israelite was no guarantee of salvation. But his two encounters with praiseworthy Gentiles are unique and only confirm his limitation of his work to the Congregation. Peter's later hesitation about Cornelius and Paul's acute difficulties with Jerusalem show definitely that Josus' mission-charge was understood among his immediate disciples as a direction

to work through Judaism, as a command to intensify the proselytizing work already under progress.

What was destined most profoundly to influence the first Christian conception of the Church was, by Jesus, connected only indirectly with the doctrine of the Congregation: his teaching about the Kingdom of God as already present. This formed no part of his customary public preaching, which centered about the Kingdom as soon to come and the righteousness required of those who aspire to enter it. But, as in Jewish apocalyptic generally, Jesus taught that the coming would not be an instantaneous event but one proceeding in successive stages. A preliminary stage was manifested in his own defeat of the powers of evil, which demonstrated that the Kingdom was "in contact" with the Jews (Lk 11.2=Mt 12.28), although for the moment this contact was visible in Jesus alone.

But from him a similar power was communicated to a group of his disciples (Lk 10.17), so that in them likewise the same contact was established. They therefore belonged rather to the Kingdom than to earth, they were already in the Kingdom, their names were already "enrolled in heaven" (Lk 10.20). Thus they were "greater" than even so supremely great a saint as the Baptist (Lk 7.28=Mt 11.11); already in possession of salvation, they were like members of a marriage party for whom fasting is so inconsistent as to be unthinkable (Mk 2.18-19,etc.). Through the supernatural power of the Kingdom their tiny group was destined for supernatural growth--like the little mustard seed developing into a tree, like

the scrap of leaven permeating great measures of meal.

Yet at the start membership in this present Kingdom was an extraordinary privilege, rigidly restricted to those who were Jesus' "disciples" in the narrowest sense of the word. We use "disciple" to cover all those, men and women, who regarded Jesus as an inspired Teacher and this usage has some support in the Gospels (Mt 12.49-50; Lk 6.17, etc.; never in Mk), but in the religious language of Judaism "disciple" is a correlative to "Rabbi" and never describes a woman. The only way to the Rabbinate was through discipleship to some Rabbi, and a familiar sight in Palestine was a Rabbi's stately progress, with his disciples literally "following" him as he walked; disciples who had left their homes to live with him during their course of instruction, to serve him, to go wherever he went and--above all--to commit painstakingly to memory everything that he taught, word for word as he taught it. It is this practice that explains Jesus' use of "follow me" or "come after me" as equivalent to "be my disciple," while his "call" was his summons to this discipleship; that Jesus, too, bore the title "Rabbi" is often forgotten.

Such discipleship to any Rabbi was always exacting but to Jesus' disciple demanded heroism. It is therefore no wonder that he warned away over-enthusiastic aspirants (Lk 14.25-32, etc.) and rejected others after a short trial. But this rejection did not necessarily mean loss of final salvation; it need not mean more than that the man must wait for it in the future Kingdom

rather than possess it immediately in the present Kingdom. This was God's normal method for mankind, the way that most men and all women must follow. In contrast, Jesus' disciples were being prepared not only to follow their Master's teaching but to become teachers in their turn. And if they attained membership in the present Kingdom, from "saved souls" they were transformed into "saving souls," not only free from active evil in themselves but able to drive it out of others. To create such a group of devoted spirits was perhaps Jesus' most arduous task; to realize that he had succeeded was his moment of supreme triumph (Lk 10.17-24, a passage that may contain later elements but whose accuracy in substance can hardly be doubted; it accords too closely with Jesus' teaching as a whole). With this group ready to carry on his work, Jesus could turn toward Jerusalem to accept whatever fate awaited him there.

To the earliest Palestinian Christians, as to Jesus, the "Church" was simply Israel and they did not use the noun to describe themselves as a whole: in Acts "church" does not appear until 5.17 and is almost always used for some local assembly; in 19.32 ff. even for the Ephesine mob. (In Acts 7.38 it means "Congregation" outright; in 9.31 and 20.28 the phraseology is Luke's.) For their own title the Palestinians chose "Way," a rendition of the familiar Hebrew Halakah, meaning "way of observing the Law;" this to the Christians would further denote "the only true way," and naturally non-Christian Jews refused this title to them (Acts 24.14).

Spirit to Jews was given for special occasion & temporary, withdrawn from recipient after object obtained.

Crucial for developing the concept of the Way was the shattering experience of the Spirit. Since the outpouring was an apocalyptic event (Acts 2.16-20,etc.), the gift of the Spirit was an abiding gift, not a promise of salvation but the actual possession of salvation: so completely was this believed that the Christians pictured themselves at the Last Judgment as not standing before the Judge but beside Him, acting as His aides (1 Thess 4.15-17; 1 Cor 6.3. Compare Lk 22.28-30, a promise which in Mt 19.28 has been too narrowly restricted to the Twelve). Consequently they were in precisely the same position as Jesus' most intimate disciples; they were already members of the Kingdom. But, where he had restricted the privilege to a very few, the power of the Spirit had broken down restrictions. Since the Spirit is given to everyone who believes, membership need no longer be limited. Since the Spirit confers supernatural wisdom and strength, women as well as men can become "disciples;" Acts makes no distinction and this Christian usage explains the widened sense of "disciple" in Mt and Lk (above). Since the Spirit confers limitless power for righteousness, the devotion demanded of his disciples by Jesus was now within the reach of all; sin--in the sense of "gross sin"--was without excuse (Acts 5.1-11; 1 Cor 5.1-8, etc.). Moreover, members of the Way, assured of their own salvation, could and should devote full energy to bring other Israelites to a sense of their share in God's promises (Rom 9.5, etc.; Acts 2.36 has undergone later revision).

The effort met with extraordinary success; but this very success altered the Christians' conception of the Way and its relation to Israel. Those whom Jesus did not accept as intimate disciples could comfort themselves--or even be comforted by him--with the knowledge that they could still be God's children. But the Way formulated a new alternative: "Either accept Jesus or deny him!" for those who heard the message there was no third possibility. So the rapid spread of the preaching to every corner of Palestine imposed the choice on all; thus dividing all into two mutually exclusive classes: those already in the Kingdom and those who had already excluded themselves forever from the Kingdom. And outside of Palestine a similar separation must have been taking place in Jewish community after Jewish community throughout the Roman Empire: as a consequence, while the Jewish Christians did not think of the Way as "Israel" directly, they came to think of it as containing all the righteous in Israel, as "the Israel of God."
of Remnant in O.T.

This belief attained visible expression in an organization that deliberately rivalled that of Israel proper. The power of the priesthood had become ceremonial only, scarcely existing outside the Temple; that many priests became Christians (Acts 6.7) was of little moment. But the appearance of Christian elders (Acts 11.30, etc.) was of the utmost moment. Jesus' denial of the Sanhedrim's authority (Mk 11.27-33) led to the erection of a rival Sanhedrim, made up of "James and the elders" (Acts 21.18) in place of "the high priest and the elders" (Acts 24.1, etc.). And once this organization was perfected, only inherited traditions need still

only duties of Jewish Priest today
1. Blessing on Day of Atonement
2. Dispenses need of non marrying deceased brothers wi
3. Blessing upon women at birth of first born.
Elders have all other functions. Robbis

hold the Way within Israel. This was realized by conservative Jewish Christians and called forth the protest now embedded in Mt 23: these new elders are given an authority that no believer should exercise over another (vv. 8-10) and the Way must not disregard the rulings of those who "sit in Moses' seat" (vv. 2,3; here "scribes and Pharisees" in place of "elders" indicates a date after A. D. 70, when the authority of the Sanhedrim was assumed by the Pharisaic scribes). But the protest was unavailing against the force of events.

And events were moving inexorably, outside of Palestine in particular. Gentiles were everywhere accepting the Christian message and were receiving the gift of the Spirit as fully as had the Jews; they were therefore without question likewise members of the present Kingdom. Were they also members of the Congregation? If so, "Congregation" and "Israel" were no longer identical. Bad

Question between Paul & Jerusalem.

This crucial question might be evaded so long as the Gentile Christians were in a minority. They could be regarded as not precisely "in" the Congregation but as having a special position slightly subordinated to it: it is no accident that the decrees of Acts 15 are in substance only the Pentateuchal laws (Lev 17-18) for Gentile "sojourners" in Palestine. And this subordination could be viewed as continuing even in the future Kingdom (Mt 5.19). Yet even this qualified favor to non-Jews separated the Way still further from the rest of Israel, while the theory itself was essentially unstable.

This instability Paul exposed remorselessly. To argue that fellow-Christians are inferior because of their non-observance of Pentateuchal legalism is to argue that one who has begun in the Spirit must seek perfection in the flesh (Gal 3.3)! Is not Christ the end of the Law for everyone who believes (Rom 10.4)? Undoubtedly the Congregation is made up of Abraham's seed--this was an axiom that even Paul never questioned--but sonship to Abraham must be reckoned by likeness of faith (Rom 4.12-16). Members of the Way have this faith and the Gentile converts have this faith; therefore it is they together who make up the Congregation, in which unbelieving Israel has now no share. Here the final step is taken: the Congregation is the Church.

Good Jewish doctrine of Proselytes

The doctrine of the Church that thus emerges is a combination of the doctrines of the Congregation and of the Way. Like the Congregation, the Church is a visible body, called into existence by God. It is a single whole; but this ideal unity is represented also by all the Christians living in any place, and is represented still more vividly by a group of Christians actually assembled "in congregation" (1 Cor 11.18, etc.). Membership in the Church confers "holiness," with many privileges not shared by the rest of mankind. And only within the Church can salvation be certainly attained. Unlike the older Congregation, however, the Church is no mixture of evil and good but, like the Way, is composed wholly of the good, already in full possession of salvation. Undoubtedly its members still suffer from the weakness of the "flesh," but such inevitable defects are not reckoned against

how about Phil 1:29 & 3.

them: wilful and gross sin, on the other hand, leads to instant exclusion. While the continuity between Congregation and Church may seem broken, a real continuity none the less exists; a continuity summed up in the classic passage Eph 5.25-27: "Christ loved the Congregation and gave himself for it that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it...to present it to himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without blemish." does not refer to future Church, but presents church needing cleansing.

This is the doctrine of the Church normally held from Paul to the beginning of the third century.

As regards special points of view:

Paul's intensely personal Christ-mysticism saw each believer intimately united to Christ and through Christ intimately united to all other believers. All Christians therefore form a "body," not in the sense of a corporate group but in the wholly realistic sense of an organism filled with life from a single source. This "body," therefore, is nothing less that the veritable Body of Christ, in which He lives and through which He acts on this earth. This magnificent conception gave Christianity a new terminology.

In John the mysticism advances from Christ to its final center in the Father (John 14.23; 16.27, etc.); the "body" concept is therefore not employed even though the sense of Christian oneness is, if possible, actually more intense than in Paul (17.21;

15.1-9, etc.). Even more intense than in Paul, likewise, is the conviction of present salvation: the true name for Christians is no longer the "servants" but the "friends" of God (15.13-15). The gap between the saved and the unsaved is therefore immeasurable; in mankind there is a sharp dichotomy by which within the Church all is white and outside the Church all is black (John 17.9; 1 John 5.19, etc.). This dichotomy virtually ruptures all continuity between Israel and the Church; despite John 4.22 (added by an editor?), the only value found in the Old Testament is its prophecy of Christ (8.17; 10.34; 15.25, etc.). On the other hand, even greater emphasis than in Paul is laid on the necessity of the "saved soul" to be a "saving soul;" whoever drinks from the fountain of Christ is thereby made a fountain of living water (4.14; 7.38-39).

John's minimizing of the connection of the Church with Israel finds constant echoes in Christian thought: abstractly the continuity is not denied, but the transformation is so miraculous that it virtually constitutes a fresh beginning. So even in Ephesians, where the concept of continuity is essential to the theme, the Church is pictured as built not on Abraham but on Christ (2.20-22; compare 1 Pet 2.5,etc.). For this doctrine the locus classicus is Mt 16.18, a passage that is the despair of students. That it is secondary is now universally admitted, for it is wholly irreconcilable with Jesus' teaching about the Kingdom, whether present or future. But it is also irreconcilable with the Evangelist's outlook on the relation of Christianity to the

Congregation (above), so that the temptation to find the solution in late textual interpolation is very strong. Never quoted until the 3rd Century. Not in Shepherd of Hermas.

The only other special problem that calls for attention is the final identification of the doctrine of the Church with that of the Congregation through the toleration of evil as well as good within it. This appears in 2 Tim 2.17-21 and otherwise only in the First Gospel (Mt 13.24-30, 36-43; 13.47-50; 22.10-14). The Matthaean passages are without exception secondary. The artifical character of the Parable of the Tares and its interpretation is notorious (the distinction drawn between "the Kingdom of the Son of Man" and "the Kingdom of the Father" shows that the editor is conscious of a central difficulty, which he tries to overcome), and the artificiality of the supplement to the Parable of the Marriage Feast is equally notorious, while if the "interpretation" added to the Parable of the Dragnet is omitted, this Parable can be read quite differently. 2 Tim 2.17-21 gives the key to these Matthaean additions: Dalis Matt & 2 Tim about 95 Eyslar

Look up

The first appearance of formal gnosticism within the Church caused immense perplexity. That its moral teachings were contrary to Christian ideals was obvious and yet the teachers professed and called themselves Christians; should they be tolerated or expelled? Matthew and the author of 2 Timothy counselled toleration; the end in any case is close at hand, when Christ's infallible Judgment will remove all offenses.

As a matter of fact, however, this counsel proved impractical. Christ's coming was delayed, the tares were beginning to infect the wheat, and Timothy's vessels of dishonor were spreading corruption into the vessels of honor. So in 1 Timothy (written later than 2 Timothy) Hymenaeus is no longer tolerated but has been "delivered to Satan" (1 Tim 1.20) and 1 John looks back with triumph on the "overcoming" (4.4) of the gnostics by the Church. So the attempt at toleration was short-lived; throughout the second century the Christians upheld the earlier ideal of the Church as "holy and without blemish." Only one voice is raised for greater liberality, that of the Pastor of Hermas. Yet even he does not dare argue for any great relaxation: a man who after admission to the Church has committed a great sin may possibly find restoration after proved repentance. But this leniency can be exercised only once; a second great sin means expulsion forever.

Note. In this study the words "save" and "salvation" are used throughout in their ordinary modern sense. In the New Testament, especially in Paul, they are often technical terms for the eschatological release.

THE AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

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"The Sense in which the New Testament is Normative for the Doctrine of the Church"*

By
Professor Eric H. Wahlstrom
Augustana Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Illinois

I. Definition.

A norm is a rule or authoritative standard. Normative is that which is relating to, or establishing a norm. The norm is not arbitrarily imposed, but is an expression of the inner character and nature of a thing. Normative is that which by virtue of being the constitutive nature of a thing governs and controls it. Our problem is, therefore, to find in what way the New Testament determines the nature of the Church, and thus becomes normative for it.

the nature of the Church is & then you can determine in what way the N.T. is normative for it.

II. The Bible as historical revelation.

1. The Biblical writings are historical documents. This fact sets before us the problem of the relation between history and revelation.

2. The Bible may be approached as an historical document, which will yield information about ancient history. The approach is then determined by an objective, scientific method, and the Bible is made the object of historical criticism, as any other source of historical data. But from this point of view the Bible is not a religious document, and to talk about revelation at this stage would be meaningless. The scientific investigator cannot deal with the problem of revelation, except in the sense that he can establish that the Church has held the Bible to be a revelation. He can, of course, make clear from an historical point of view what the content of the Biblical revelation has been understood to be. But revelation cannot be found in a history, even Biblical, viewed as profane, a history which has no place for God.

3. In order to establish a relation between history and revelation, history, too, must be accepted in a religious sense. The Bible is not any kind of

*A paper prepared for the meeting of the Committee in New York on May 31st and June 1st, 1940.

history, not a mere chronicle of human events, depending merely on immanent causes, but a history of God's creative and redemptive activity. The Bible is history written from the point of view of God's activity in history. It tells of God active in the world as Creator and Redeemer, and the whole story reveals His eternal purpose. This is history in a religious sense, from the point of view of faith. When faith sees God thus working in history, this history becomes the medium through which the divine revelation is given. On the basis of this "sacred" history all other history is understood and interpreted. We see God active in all history, because we learn from the Bible that God does work in history.

III. The Bible as testimony to God's creative and redemptive acts.

1. The Church has always held that the Creator and the Redeemer are one and the same God. Creation and redemption are both activities of God through the Word. God continually confers life and executes judgment (Jn. 5:21,22).
2. The acts of God recorded in the Old Testament are acts of redemption, the exodus, the return from exile, the preaching of the prophets, etc. Thus God created for himself a people, who became the bearer of His revelation.
3. The central act of redemption is the Cross. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."
4. From the vantage point of the Cross the Bible looks forward into eternity, where God continues to be the God who redeems (Rev. 5:9,10).
5. These are acts of God, of cosmic significance, but they occur in history, and are conditioned by time and space.
6. The Bible is Heilsgeschichte, the record of God's saving activity, and its whole message can be comprehended in one statement: God creates and God saves. This is the Bible's own view of its nature.

Dynamic. Dramatic theory - Unity of Bible found in its purpose.

"Revelation is a by-product of Redemption."

IV. The Bible as revelation.

1. It is the Bible's nature as Heilsgeschichte that makes it a revelation. God reveals himself in His creative-redemptive activity. Revelation is not a static concept, but denotes the saving activity in which God makes himself known in the world, and creates for himself a people. The content of the revelation is that God always has been, is, and ever will be a God who redeems. To know God in the Christian sense is to know Him through the activity of the (1) Spirit as the (2) Redeemer and (3) Creator. The knowledge of a God who is not the Redeemer is not the knowledge of the Christian God, but of a self-made idol.

2. The Bible is the product of the saving activity of God, or the activity of the Spirit, just as the Church, or the people of God, is created through this same divine activity. The record of the saving acts of God is the revelation of God. Historical events need not be revealed. The facts of Christ need not be revealed, but the meaning of them for e.g. Christ died for us. that is important

3. The Bible is not merely the record, but the living Word of God. This means that God continues "until now" the divine activity of redemption, and that this activity is carried out through the Bible which constitutes it the Word of God and makes it a revelation. Apart from this present activity of the Spirit the Bible would be a human document and no more.

4. This Word meets man in the present as "the power of God unto salvation," in that through this Word the Holy Spirit calls, gathers, and sanctifies the Church of God.

V. The New Testament as normative.

1. The New Testament is the first and fundamental witness to the redemptive act of God in Christ. It is the record and the confession of the fact that "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." This independent and fundamental character of the testimony of the early Church cannot be duplicated. The source of knowledge of Christ is N.T. & outside we have no saving knowledge

BRL. Spirit = author or (Efficient cause)
Church = Agent
Word = Instrument
of Salvation.

2. The divine redemptive activity revealed in Christ created the Church and also the New Testament. The Holy Spirit works today through the Word and in the Church, carrying out God's purpose of redemption. The Spirit, the Church, and the Word thus constitute an inseparable unity, which rests ultimately on the redemptive activity of God.

Efficient cause
result
means

3. The normativeness of the New Testament rests on this unity of the Spirit, or the saving activity of God. The Spirit uses the Word in the creation of the Church, and thus the origin and nature of the Church are determined by the Word. The Word meets the individual as the "power of God unto salvation," through this Word he finds himself introduced into the Church, the followship of believers, and all this the Christian knows is the work of the same Spirit who is active in the Church and in the Scriptures. The Christian stands in the spiritual continuum of the redemptive activity of God, and in this spiritual continuum the Word is the norm, for it is through this Word that God carries out His redemptive activity.

1 - Eff

This norm is absolute, for it determines the Church as the redeemed people of God. Apart from this saving activity of God through the Word there can be no Church and no redemption.

4. In a secondary sense the Bible, as an historical document, tells us how this spiritual life, created by God through the Spirit, has appeared in the world through the centuries. Here we meet with changing forms and varied expressions. These forms are not normative, but useful as illustrations of how the spiritual life has adapted itself to changing human conditions.

2 Neg

5. Negative propositions.

   a. The theory of verbal inspiration does not make the New Testament normative, because it imposes on the New Testament a unity which it does not possess.

legalism.

b. To elevate certain parts of Scripture, as for instance the words of Jesus, above other parts opens the way for human subjectivism.

c. Traditions, whether embodied in the Church or in the confessions, are of secondary authority, since they depend upon the New Testament.

d. The forms of the New Testament Church - organization, worship, polity, orders, etc. - being expressions of the spiritual life created by God through the Word, are not normative for the Church of today. Any claim which makes it essential for the Church to reproduce any or all of these New Testament forms must be denied. ?

.VI. Conclusions.

1. Every expression of faith and practice in the Church must manifest a congruity and inner continuity with the divine, redemptive activity of the Spirit. The norm

2. Every doctrine and practice, organization or program, must justify itself by whether it serves or hinders, makes known or hides, God's redemptive activity.

3. God's redeeming activity, as revealed in the Word, must be the central principle of both faith and practice, both the message and the life of the Church. "What makes Christ in Scripture" = Source

This would apply even to our understanding of the Bible. Scripture is that which reveals and sets forth the redemptive activity of God.

4. The validation of this divine activity (and at the same time of the Bible) lies in the fact that it meets us as the "power of God unto salvation." This means that ultimately it is the activity of the Spirit in the Word and in the Church which makes the Bible normative for the whole Church.

5. The normativeness of the New Testament is, therefore, always a confession of faith. It is not more subjectivism, however, for the confession grows out of and is dependent upon the nature of the Bible itself (III, IV).

THE AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

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The Kingdom of God and the Church *

By
Professor Walter M. Horton, D.D.
The Graduate School of Theology, Oberlin College, Oberlin, Ohio

My colleague Professor Craig has defined the Biblical meaning of the terms "Kingdom of God" and "Church", and I presuppose the results of his study. Particularly significant are his analysis of the basic Old Testament concept of the Kingdom of God into three main aspects - "eternal fact", "present manifestation", and "consummation still to come" - and his description of the New Testament Church as "the sphere of God's salvation in the present .... prophetic of his ultimate triumph in the Kingdom of God .... that is yet to come."

While Professor Craig is inclined to restrict the term "Kingdom of God" (both in the New Testament and in modern usage) to the hope of a radically restored and utterly transformed future world order, separated from the present corrupt world order by a great crisis of divine judgment and redemption, it is clear from his own description that the "present" and "eternal" meanings of the term are always implicit in it, even when hope is as sharply concentrated upon the "future" meaning as was the case in New Testament times. We shall use the term in its full threefold sense; for taken thus comprehensively it is the clue to all Christian throught, whereas in the merely "future" sense (which is indeed the most typical and decisive) it is the clue only to one periodically disappearing and reappearing factor in Christian thought. The truth seems to be that as the relationship between the Church and the world constantly shifts, first one and then another of the three meanings of the "Kingdom" is forced into prominence, while the others are obscured; but if any of the three is utterly lost, the Gospel itself is lost and a reformation of the Church is in order.

I. The Kingdom and the Church in the History of Christian Thought.

1. The Early Church and the Millennial Hope.

During the era of persecution that lasted down to the establishment of the "Christian Empire" by Constantine the Great, the Christian Good News continued to

*A paper prepared for the meeting of the Committee in N.Y. on May 31 and June 1,1940

The Millennial Hope posted out after the time of Origen.

center in the New Testament hope of an imminent, visible return of Christ upon the clouds, to reign in New Jerusalem with his saints over a wondrously fruitful and prosperous earth. Details of this eschatology varied, as they vary in the New Testament, but it always involved at least the two elements upon which Dr. Craig comments in the New Testament eschatology: (1) it hoped for a "new society" on the earth; but (2) this new society was to result from divine intervention rather than from any "program of social reconstruction." The Church was therefore not a "means" to the Kingdom of God, but an "earnest" or "foretaste" of the coming new order, a faithful "little flock" to whom God would "give" His Kingdom in due season.

2. The Catholic Church and the Present Reign of Christ.

The earthly triumph of the Gospel over the imperial might of Rome was a great surprise to the Christians, and led them to revise their conception of the Kingdom of God on earth. While they continued to look forward to the heavenly and eternal Kingdom, which was to follow the general resurrection and judgment at the end of history, they now tended to identify God's earthly Kingdom with the existing Christian Empire, rather than with the coming millennial reign. In the East, where Christianized Roman civilization lasted a thousand years longer than in the West, this conception has endured down to our own times, having been preserved after the fall of Constantinople by the Russian Orthodox Church and the other national Eastern Churches. Since the time of Ivan III the Russian Czars have ruled as Christ's earthly viceroys, like the Byzantine Emperors before them. The ecclesiastical authorities have shared with the civil authorities in administering this Christian Empire; but their power has been confined to the sphere of doctrine and ritual.

Holy Russia

Because of differing political circumstances, disillusionment with the Christian Empire came earlier in the West then in the East. After the sack of Rome by Alaric in 410 A.D., the reign of Christ in Western Europe became exceedingly difficult to perceive! It was St. Augustine's City of God which led Western Christianity to transfer its faith from the crumbling Roman Empire to the militant and heroic Roman Catholic Church, and to maintain faith in that Church as the

Kingdom of Christ for over a thousand years. According to St. Augustine, it is a mistake - which he confesses he shared himself at one time - to look forward to a coming millennial reign of Christ. The millennium began with the first coming of Christ in the flesh. The "first resurrection" spoken of in the New Testament is the New Birth which Christ has already brought to those who are his. There will be a second resurrection at the end of history, which will inaugurate God's eternal Kingdom; but "now too", says St. Augustine, "the Church is the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of heaven. Therefore the saints reign with Him even now, but otherwise than they shall reign in the future."(1) This is the charter of that earthly dominion and temporal power which the Church of Rome exercised so effectively during the long period of political anarchy that followed St. Augustine's death, and to which she still officially lays claim.

It is not to be supposed that Catholic Christians over-idealize this institutional form of the Church's vice-regency. While they uphold her authority to exercise the power of the Keys in both heavenly and earthly affairs, they do not imagine that in the institutional sphere God's will is perfectly done "on earth as it is in heaven." St. Augustine himself, though he defended the authority of the visible, institutional Church against the Donatist schism, never equated the City of God or the Kingdom of Christ with the visible Church, but with the "invisible union (compages) of love"(2) which joins all those born of the Spirit into a true communion of saints. For the medieval mind, this true Church was more clearly to be seen in the monastic orders, with their strict discipline and their ardent desire to subject their whole communal life to the will of God, than in the mixed multitude of half-christianized barbarians who composed the whole group of baptized Catholics. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries this monastic conception of the Kingdom of God underwent a daring development at the hands of

(1). De civ. Dei, XX,9.
(2). De unit. eccl., XXI, 60.

Joachim of Fiore and the Spiritual Franciscans. They maintained that the Age of the Son, which began with the coming of Christ and was under the authority of the Church of Peter and the Popes, was now about to give way to the Age of the Spirit, when all the world would become a vast nonastery, full of prayer and song and every spiritual grace. The Franciscan movement, which carried monastic devotion out of the cloister into the common walks of life, was believed by many to be the fulfilment of Joachim's prophecies. Had all these hopes been justified, this would indeed have been a present divine reign co-extensive with earthly society, as in the old hope of the millennium.

Whether in its Eastern form as the Christian Empire, its Papal form as the temporal power of the visible Church, or its monastic form as the spiritual communion of saints, the Catholic hope of the Kingdom has always laid extraordinary stress upon the present earthly reign of Christ through his body the Church - a spiritual body at its centre, a political power at its periphery. In this view, the Church is not a means to the Kingdom, but an end in itself, for which (as some of the Fathers maintained) the world itself was created.

3. Protestantism and Theocracy.

If the Early Church stressed the future Millennium, and the Catholic Church the present reign of Christ, original Protestantism stressed the eternal sovereignty of God the Father Almighty, as affirmed in the Old Testament; and by this it proposed to judge all earthly institutions, ecclesiastical or secular. While the more radical wing of the Reformation leaned toward feverish millennian expectations, the prevailing Protestant view of the Kingdom of God was sober and conservative, like that of the Jewish theocrats who purged their religion of idolatry in Babylonian exile, and set up the Second Temple in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Lutheranism and Calvinism had of course different conceptions of the Kingdom of God. In the Lutheran doctrine of the "two kingdoms", secular sovereignty was wielded by the Christian prince in the name of that order of creation (Schöpfungsordnung) which God had established from the foundation of the world, and that

order of conservation whereby God kept the creation from flying into anarchy when it had been corrupted by sin. The Church had little to do with the Kingdom of God in this first sense. Her fellowship coincided rather with that new spiritual Kingdom which Christ had established by his redeeming sacrifice, and within which abounded all the spiritual graces of the Pauline Church. In practice this meant a sharp contrast between the rule of force in public life and the rule of spiritual freedom in the more intimate circle of Christian church life and family life. The Calvinists aspired to bridge this gulf, and put private life, church life, and public life all alike under the control of the revealed will of God, which included the evangelical counsels of the New Testament but was fundamentally based upon the Old Testament Law. The term "theocracy" is much more clearly applicable to the Calvinist than to the Lutheran conception; yet both wings of the Reformation, as they faced the claim of the Roman Church to represent the Kingdom of Christ, rejected that claim by substantially the same theocratic test: Rome was shown to be a usurper, because not in conformity with that charter of divine constitutional government which God had laid down in His creation, and issued to the world in Holy Scripture.

What is the influence of this decal eden on Nazi Germany?

In the Reformation, then, and above all in Calvinism, the Christian idea of the Kingdom of God had reverted to its original Jewish sources; from the millennial hope of a future kingdom and the Catholic sense of a present reign of Christ, it had gone back to the lofty and severe faith of the Hebrew prophets in an eternal divine order established at the creation, departed from at one's peril, and destined to be reestablished everlastingly at the end of time, in spite of the machinations of all evil men and angels. The Church was to this eternal Kingdom what the Jewish community under the Second Temple was to the divine ordinances which it sought to obey, but which were realized in their perfection only at the beginning and the end of history. The obedience of this "saving remnant" to the will of their divine Sovereign was a sort of prayer that He might some time manifest His Sovereignty in its completeness, and meanwhile prosper His servants on their way

through an evil and rebellious world. Richard Baxter spoke for all Protestantism when he said, "The World is a Kingdom whereof God is the King.... an absolute Monarchy .... by the title of Creation .... God is the end as well as the beginning of the divine monarchy of the world ... all men as men are the subjects of God's Kingdom, as to Obligations and Duty, and God will not ask the consent of any man to be so obliged."(1) Ezekiel or Ezra might have used the same language.

II. The Kingdom and the Church in American Thought.

H. Richard Niebuhr has put us all in his debt by his analysis of the development of the idea of the Kingdom of God in the history of American Protestantism. It has been customary for European observers of American church life to remark upon the extraordinary vogue among us of the idea of "building the Kingdom", and "making the Church a means to the Kingdom of God." They have usually asserted that the idea of the Kingdom of God presupposed in such "activistic" slogans is a shallow and secular one, quite remote from historic Christianity. Niebuhr shows that this is not so; that in its roots the American idea of the Kingdom of God is thoroughly Christian. At least one European visitor has remarked in my hearing that on this fundamentally important issue Niebuhr's book was the most illuminating document he had read since coming to this country, and was calculated to do much to bridge the gulf of misunderstanding that how exists between European and American Christianity.

We may sum up Niebuhr's account by saying that the American idea of the Kingdom of God has retraced the three stages which Christian thought had already passed through, but in reverse order. As we have seen the emphasis moving back from the future (Millennarianism) through the present (Catholicism) to the eternal order of creation (Protestantism), Niebuhr sees the emphasis moving forward again from the Puritan faith in the sovereignty of God, through the Evangelical faith in the present reign of Christ the Redeemer, to the Liberal Protestant faith in a future radical reform of human society which would deserve to be called the

(1). Baxter, A Holy Commonwealth, theses 24,26,28, cited in H. Richard Niebuhr, The Kingdom of God in America, pp. 52,53.

Millennium. Only in its recent secularized forms is this characteristic "American dream" to be called "utilitarian," "utopian", or "fatuously optimistic." Essentially, it is the ancient Christian hope planted out in a new country, where tradition has not impeded its growth, and circumstances have encouraged Christians to "claim the promises" in definite and concrete terms.

The most crucial moment in the development of the distinctively American conception of the Kingdom of God was the moment when the success of the Evangelical revivals began to generate hopes of a new heaven and a new earth. The Great Awakening under Jonathan Edwards and Whitefield, and most of the revivals which followed in its train, were fundamentally personal in character. They aimed primarily to make the will of God regnant in individual lives, transformed by the redeeming power of the Living Christ. But the wide-spread and deep-going character of this "life-changing" process (as the Oxford Groups would say) aroused hopes among the evangelists (as today among the "Groupers", and long ago among the Franciscans) that God might regenerate society as a whole through the agency of this movement. Jonathan Edwards himself saw in the Great Awakening "the dawning, or at least a prelude of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in Scripture, which, in the progress and issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind." While he saw the centre and the glory of the coming millennial reign in the spiritual "knowledge" and "holiness" of Christ's immensely expanded and excellently ordered Church, he felt that "such a spiritual estate" as this would tend to produce "health and long life .... ease, quietness, pleasantness, and cheerfulness of mind, also wealth and a great increase of children," together with "universal peace and a good understanding among the nations of the world."(1) Edwards' immediate successor, Hopkins, saw great improvements in "the art of husbandry" and "the mechanic arts" as concomitants of the coming Millennium, and predicted that by these means, together with growing "benevolence and fervent charity", mankind might be permanently delivered from economic want.(2) Finney, the later successor of Edwards and

(1). Niebuhr, op. cit., pp. 141-45.
(2). Op. cit., p. 146.

Hopkins in this line of thought, saw a relationship of cause and effect between individual redemption and social reform in the coming age. The spirit of saved men, he said, is "necessarily that of the reformer." Reform is "their business, their profession, their life" - especially, in those pre-Civil-War days, the great causes of peace, antislavery and temperance.

The essential difference between the hope of the Kingdom as represented by Finney in the early part of the nineteenth century and as represented by Gladden and Rauschenbusch in the latter pa rt of the century is not to be found in any replacement of Christian presuppositions by purely secular ones. The growth of materialism and utilitarianism in America was indeed alarming at this period; but it was the intent of the Social Gospel to combat this trend in the name of Christ and the Kingdom. The difference lies rather in a new conception of the function of the Church in relation to social change. The Early Christians saw in the Church an "earnest" of a new order which must be brought about by divine intervention; the Catholics saw in it the evidence of Christ's present reign among men; original Protestantism saw in it a "faithful remnant" keeping the ordinances of the divine Sovereign in the midst of an evil world; the Evangelicals saw in its rapid extension and the philanthropies to which it gave rise the beginnings of a new heaven and a new earth; but the Social Gospel saw in it God's chief instrument for establishing His rule in the social order; or, as Rauschenbusch puts it in his Theology for the Social Gospel, the Church was the great "social factor in salvation."(1)

This meant on the one hand to ascribe a higher place to the Church than had ever been ascribed to her, and on the other hand to reduce her to the humble status of a social servitor. The Church was not only to redeem individuals, one by one, and trust them to sweeten their environment, but also to redeem society from all sorts of collective evils; and by her collective influence she was not only to uphold the ordinances of God against the rebellion of man, but also to transform the world in its entirety, and thus usher in God's eternal Kingdom. This stupendous work she was to accomplish, however, not by asserting herself but by effacing

(1). Rauschenbusch, Theology for the Social Gospel, Chap. XII.

herself: by making herself the willing servant of every human need, and at last dying as a separate institution that the Kingdom of God might live in all human institutions. Rauschenbusch never tires of warning us that it is always fatal to make the Church an end in herself, instead of a means to the building of God's Kingdom in individual and social life.(1) Stanley Jones' recent strictures on the Madras Missionary Conference are based on the same point of view. In its practical application to missionary policy, this attitude means less stress upon individual baptisms and more stress upon the pervasive influence of the Gospel upon whole systems of culture and civilization.

III. The Place of the Church in the Strategy of the Kingdom of God.

In the early years of the twentieth century the American hope of the Kingdom of God was in danger of being severed from its Christian roots and thoroughly secularized. A complacent satisfaction with the spread of Anglo-Saxon culture over the face of the globe, and the increase of material comforts through mechanical invention, was being substituted for the ancient call to radical repentance and spiritual renewal; and it was hard to see what place was left for the Church in this humanized "kingdom", save as a disseminator of up-to-date ideas and a purveyor of modern conveniences to backward races and classes. But the humiliations and frustrations of the last twenty-five years have put American Protestants in a more penitent and genuinely religious mood, driving them back afresh upon their whole Christian heritage in search of light and strength wherewith to face the present crisis of Christian civilization. Perhaps if the American faith in the Kingdom of God, thus chastened and deepened by adversity, were now to be restated in its implications for the Church, it might do more for our discouraged generation than the too ebullient faith of our predecessors did for their too complacent contemporaries.

1. The Church as Reflecting God's Eternal Reign in Creation.

The unshakable foundation of all Christian faith and hope is God's original

(1). Ibid., Chap. XIII.

creation of "heaven and earth and all things visible and invisible." However corrupt the world may have become, its original stuff and structure are "very good." Having created a good world, God sustains and governs it forever after, never swerving from His original good intent, never permitting the folly and wickedness of His creatures to go so far as to destroy His governing order. When they go to a certain point, evil-doers destroy themselves - together with much good - in a tragic collapse; but they can never destroy the eternal sovereignty of God. That assurance is our great stay in these evil times.

The Kingdom of God, in this first and fundamental sense is found everywhere, even in the midst of violence, hatred and sinful pride; for God knows how, even there, to "make the wrath of men to praise Him." It is present in the whole course of events, secular as well as sacred. The significance of the Church is that in a world for the most part ignorant of, indifferent to, or rebellious against its Creator, there is at least a little band of people acknowledging the divine sovereignty, and seeking (however half-heartedly and stumblingly) to make the divine will the law of life. In the Church, the original ordo creationis is expressed as nowhere else in God's whole universe; for apart from her, the whole of Nature is mute, and the whole of History gives forth but a confused noise; only here is the heavenly King consciously confessed and glorified by His creatures, in thought, word and deed. The fellowship of the Church, thus conceived, includes all those who have received the "baptism of desire", and cry out in thirst for the living God, however mistakenly they may conceive Him; but the trajectory of the Church through human history is most clearly to be traced through God's Chosen People, Israel, who first of all nations decisively turned away from idols to serve the Lord of the whole earth.

2. The Church as the Capital of Christ's Present Empire.

It is the central affirmation of Christian faith that the Creator has not left His creatures to their own devices, raining down favor upon the obedient and punishment upon the disobedient while staying aloft in His heaven, but that

"for us men and our salvation" He has come down from heaven and assumed our earthly nature, suffering even the death of the Cross for our redemption. The relationship established between God the Redeemer and those who accept His redeeming grace is a new sort of Kingship: the sovereignty of constraining love instead of the sovereignty of almighty power. Between Christ the King and his subjects there is deep, intimate fellowship (koinonia), like that which unites the members of a family, but transcending all natural boundaries of race and clan. The Kingdom of Christ is a "realm of grace", from which all legality and all violence are excluded. It is a bit of heaven on earth, the Kingdom of God in our midst.

The visible Church in its "spotted actuality" is not the Kingdom of Christ. Only the inner core of vital sanctity in the Church, the una sancta ecclesia Dei, answers to that description. This it is which periodically revitalizes the whole life of the visible Church, when the world seems to have corrupted it fatally. Because of this holy Presence, the corporate life of Christ dwelling in her midst, the Church has power to cleanse and renew the lives of her members; and all who have felt the touch of this Presence know that against it the gates of hell cannot prevail. Although the whole visible Church can claim no such sanctity and saving grace as this, she is nevertheless engaged in a ministry of preaching, teaching, sacramental observances and works of charity without which, humanly speaking, the realm of Christ could not be perpetuated from generation to generation, and could not extend its sway over the world. These ministries furnish channels through which the stream of special revelation and special grace flows down from Calvary and out into life. If the ecclesiola or communion of saints is the heart or capital of Christ's Kingdom, its territory also includes the "Great Church", and through it reaches out to sanctify considerable parts of so-called "secular" society as peripheral regions of the same realm. Whether political and economic life on a grand scale is capable of being raised above the level of the ordo creationis and incorporated in the ordo redemptionis is a matter of dispute among Christians. In the interest of honesty, it is better to admit that as yet the best that has

been achieved in these realms is that very uncommon thing known as "common justice", while Christian love is limited to more intimate spheres. That means, of course, that we have to look beyond the present reign of Christ among his redeemed, and pray for a future coming of God's Kingdom.

3. The Church as Nucleus of a Coming World Order.

The hope of a coming public triumph of God in earthly affairs has been associated with millennial hopes which have repeatedly been disappointed. These disappointments, as well as the achievements of divine Providence in Christian history, inevitably and properly shape our present expectations. Christian eschatology is shaped partly by the inspired imagery of Bible prophecy and parable, partly by the course of subsequent events. One of the most startling of these subsequent events was the unexpected triumph of the Early Church, which leavened and saved Roman civilization instead of witnessing its utter destruction as prophesied in the Apocalypse. This means that the Church is truly a factor in the building of the Kingdom of God, as the Social Gospel has always asserted; but it suggests that the Church's most significant contribution to the coming of the Kingdom may not be the launching of great schemes of social reconstruction, or the manipulating of political pressures to bring them about. "Let the Church be the Church" was a principle to which the Oxford Conference on "Church, Community and State" was led, as the outcome of all its sociological discussions. That is to say, a Church's primary function is so to wait upon God, so to allow its own life to be molded by His power, that it becomes a living cell of the new divine order that is to be. Practical good works, and conscious striving toward new victories of divine grace in the public order, will inevitably issue from every such living cell, as signs of its life. But its greatest service is to be alive, in a higher order of life than that of the secular society about it, or even the order of creation. For God means not only to cleanse the world of corruption, but to raise it to a new supernatural level, of which the resurrection of Christ and the outpouring of the Spirit in the Church were the first not the last manifestations.

4. The Church as a Seed-Plot for Heaven.

At the end of history as at its beginning stands Eternity. God is the end and consummation of all His creatures, as He is their source and their sustainer. History therefore cannot be the scene of the final triumph of God's Kingdom. As long as history lasts, judgment and redemption must continue to be coördinate principles. Every great historical crisis, such as that which is now upon us, is both a day of wrath and a time of deliverance, according to the way it is received. As long as new generations of men continue to come upon the scene, the drama of redemption may and almost certainly will be interrupted by new acts of rebellion and apostasy; though it is our hope that from even the worst of these God means to lead us through to victories that may make the victory of the Early Church pale into insignificance. The Church is deeply concerned to do her part in making these temporal victories possible; but she is also concerned to prepare men for "the life of the world to come." As she hopes to help civilization through periods of disintegration to new eras of peace and creativity, she also hopes to see all her children through the crisis of death into the life everlasting. When she is called a "colony of heaven", it is therefore in two equally important senses. On the one hand, she represents the beginning of a new world order here on earth; on the other hand, she sends home her colonists, when their work is done, to well-earned retirement and a new lease of life in the Mother Country. There, not here, is the final fruition of all our efforts and all God's grace.

THE AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

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"The Importance of a Functional Study of the Church" *

By
Prof. William O. Carver, D.D.
Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

In any study of the Church, including that of this Committee, it is impossible to escape the fact that we are dealing with a term lacking in accurate definition, and often beset with such ambiguity as to make orderly progress difficult. In oral discussions, in current literature including theological magazines, in some of the most popular and influential books, and even in most councils and conferences, one often feels uncertain as to just what connotation is involved. Within a single paragraph the term may be used in as many as three senses with no indication that the author is aware of the shifting meanings of the principal term. When one discovers that this ambiguity, or lack of definiteness, obtains in discussions throughout the entire course of Christian history, one becomes aware of the inherent, deep-lying difficulties involved in the conception. We may not hope to arrive at an entirely clear-cut definition of the Church in varying contexts, so as to remove all obscurity and difficulty. It is perhaps too much to hope that we may coin the precious metal of the great spiritual values involved in specific denominations which can constitute a common currency for the interchange of ideas among all who are seeking to know and to develop that supremely important movement which, in a general way, people know as Christianity and undertake to make concrete as the Church.

The difficulties involved put upon us, all the more, the obligation, earnestly and rigorously, to seek agreement in our use of the term in any such important study as that which looks toward spiritual unity among "all the saints" of the Christ, and to whatever measure of church union may be involved in loyalty to the Christian enterprise and to the needs of the gospel of the Kingdom of God

* A paper prepared for the meeting of the Committee to be held in New York City on November 15 and 16, 1940.

so far as we may have the opportunity and corresponding obligation to proclaim and promote that gospel.

Various approaches may be made in the study of the Church. It would seem that definition would be one of the first steps. When definition is undertaken it does not seem always to be approached from angles that can give satisfactory results. Approached from any angle, it may be made to yield valuable ideas and contributing considerations. In general the approach of the Faith and Order Movement is powerfully influenced by a deep desire, in many a passionate longing, for organic union. A frequently employed term is "the reunion of Christendom", which overlooks the historical fact that the "Christendom" immediately involved has never been united; nor has there been in the course of Protestantism any commonly accepted definition of the Church. One of the most powerful influences for the separateness of the denominations has turned exactly on different conceptions of the Church.

Usually the definitions proceed from the standpoint of the Church itself as an institution. One does not often meet at the threshold of discussion the question of what the Church is for. It would seem that church "polity" ought largely to be determined by the function of the Church. The conception of the function bears directly and, properly, determinatively on our ideas about the Church itself; its "faith and order"; its ministry, its creeds and canons; its sacraments and ordinances; its institutional constitution and organization; its worship and liturgies; its practical undertakings in their character, extent, and methods; its relation within itself, to sects and sections; its relation to other forms and institutions of society; its world and cosmic consciousness. Every one of these aspects and relations must in part be determined by the purpose of the Church in its whole historic and prophetic meaning, and will in turn react upon the way in which the function of the Church is conceived.

Not merely logically, but as demonstrated in actual facts the conception of the function of the Church influences understanding and use of the Scriptures,

both in general and in specific items and teachings. Exegesis is powerfully influenced by ecclesiology, and even more by ecclesiastical authority; in distribution of emphasis and in the use of the Scripture text, one needs only to think of definite differences among denominations in the measure of their appropriation and use of Romans, Hebrews, Galatians, of their preferences among the gospels, and of the differences in specific understanding of the meanings of particular texts and sections of the different writings.

What we conceive the Church to exist for will properly exercise great influence over our relation to the Church and our use of it, if we think that we may use it. Is the Church an end, or only a means to an end? Or is it partly the one and partly the other? If we think of the Church as means, how closely is it related to its end, and what place does it hold to other means which may contribute to the same end? Must the Church control all other means? May it accept any measure of control from some other source which is likewise contributing to the same end?

Among numerous works investigated in pursuing this subject, the writer has given particular attention to two discussions. First is the very able and extremely interesting volume by Dr. Flew, The Mission of the Ecclesia, which must be taken as a sort of basal handbook and guide for the researches and deliberations of this Committee. For the other volume the writer has chosen a work by an author of his own denomination, Ecclesiology, by the late Dr. E. C. Dargan, for fifteen years professor in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, for ten years editorial secretary of the Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, of which Convention he was also for three years the President. He was, furthermore, one of the most beloved and able pastors and writers of his denomination. He was selected for study not because his work, authoratative in his own denomination, has come to be known in other communions, as very likely it has not; but because Baptists are, among larger denominations, perhaps the most thoroughgoing individualists and congregationalists. Both those authors, particularly

Dr. Flew, draw heavily on the great and authoratative volume of Hort, The New Teatament Ecclesia. Both these volumes, in common with most others, in defining the Church start from the institution, not from the objective of Christianity and the function of the Church within Christianity. And this is the more striking in the case of Dr. Flew, in the light of his title. At every stage of his discussion, "the mission of the Church" is treated after, and the discussion is influenced by, the previous presentation of some other aspect of the Church.

In the case of Dr. Dargan, ecclesiological theories and ecclesiostical types occupy first place, and function receives secondary treatment. For example, a chapter headed "Character and Functions of the Churches" begins by discussing "the church itself" and inquires "how the New Testament churches were formed and of whom they were composed". Then taking up the "functions of the local church" it defines them as: "(1) The regulation of its own members"; "(2) The election of its officers, servants, and messengers"; "(3) The maintenance of worship and the ordinances"; "(4) In general, the management of its own affairs." Passing on "to consider the Church in its outer relations" the discussion first guards the autonomy and independence of the local church by denying "subordination of one church to another"; "subjection of churches . . . to any common human authority"; any "territorial union of the churches." There were "positive relations of the churches to each other involving noteworthy points of contact and cooperation," "a certain union and interdependence of these local bodies," "not organic or governmental, but . . . . community of life and interests," with specifications. The point here is that "functions" are not treated at all in the chapter except as involved in the New Testament form of church polity.

The work takes note of "those few, but important passages, in which the word 'Church' is used in its broadest meaning and denotes the whole body of true believers in Christ on earth and in heaven and in all ages", citing Eph. 1:22; 3:10,21; 5:23-32; Col. 1:18,24; Heb. 12:23. It is said to be "noteworthy that in Ephesians the word is used only in this general sense . . . ". But "there is

no trace whatever of any organization beyond the local church". The relation of the church to the Kingdom of God is discussed at some length, but not to the Church, even in this "universal" but "spiritual" sense; and "the universal Church while conterminous with the Kingdom" is declared to be "not identical with it", but is "the 'ideal assembly' of all true believers."

Dr. Dargan has been quoted at some length because he represents the historic position of Baptists since the Reformation; and so far as he goes represents the authoratative position of the Southern Baptist Convention, although there has been a marked increase of interest among Southern Baptists in the universal spiritual Church.

It is not meant to say that Dr. Flew does not give wide recognition to the function of the Church. He discusses it as a "believing," "witnessing," "worshiping" community, and a "community pledged to a new way of life." Also he recognizes the world-wide mission of the Church, quoting Lietzmann (The Beginnings of the Christian Church) that "from the very beginning the original Church was a missionary Church." In discussing "positive principles for the doctrine of the Ecclesia," he begins by affirming that the "divine purpose for the people of God cannot be thwarted by rejection." Still he is never able to break away from the wide practice of interpreting "the divine purpose" in the Church from the standpoint of "the ministry"; nor from the conception of the organic continuity of the Hebrew nation and Church in the Christian Church. It is at this point that we must face extensive and radical dissent. It lies beyond the purpose of this paper to present the opposing view: that Judaism, the Temple, the Jewish Church as an institution were all rejected and set aside; and that the Church, so far as it is to be institutionally conceived, is a new creation.

We might expect to find in the reports of the Oxford, Edinburgh, and Madras Conferences clarity and consistency in definition of the Church and in use of the term, certainly in the section on "Findings and Recommendations" of the Madras Conference which had for its theme "The World Mission of the Church".

Section II of that Conference dealt expressly with "The Church - Its Nature and Function". The report begins with affirming agreement with the "description of the Church set forth at Edinburgh". But that "description" is quite too general to be applied concretely and consistently in "the active witnessbearing" to which the Commission was addressing itself. Consequently their whole discussion (pp. 22-27) abounds in statements that fit poorly with the descriptive definition adopted at the start, and deals with activities not of the Church, but of the churches and of subsidiary organizations and agencies. Indeed the definition is an understandable, but rather unintelligible, effort to put into one statement the nature and function of the specifically spiritual and intangible Church of all ages and realms and of the theoretical temporal, organic and organized all-comprehensive number of believers living and acting at any given moment on the earth. The result is a statement too vague to be subject to specific criticism, describing an entity too inchoate for practical functioning or understanding.

Institution and ministry were originally determined by the mission of Christianity. But in "the new Israel" Paul and the other New Testament writers disclosed no intention - but per contra - of carrying forward the institutional, sacerdotal, sacramentarian aspects of the national Israel. They are concerned for the continuity of the purpose of God, of His grace, of His plan for reaching "all the families of the earth" with His redemption.

Flew very properly observes that "in most English work(s) on the subject, the ministry is given more attention than the Ecclesia itself". The New Testament, he says, points a better way by starting with "the origin and nature of the ministry of the Church." Flew asks first to center attention "on the essential nature of the Church" which the ministry serves. Unfortunately Flew himself begins from the wrong point to determine "the essential nature of the Church." Taking up the discussion, "in what sense is the ministry essential to the Church?", he says "the primary question here is the place of the apostles in the primitive community." Should we not rather say that this question itself

hinges on the prior question of the function of the "community"? While Flew frees himself from the more rigid claims for the ministry in the Church, he never gives proper consideration to the determinative influence of the purpose of Christianity. The conviction of the author of this paper is that there is not one ecclesiastical function that can be shown to have been claimed, exercised, or accorded to The Twelve in the New Testament. The apostolate was not an "office" in a "Church" as an institution. The apostles were men filling functions in the enterprise of Christianity according to the purpose of the Christ, and they never became officers in any church, and never recognized the Church as having officers. Flew very properly says that the term "hierarchy" "conveys associations of earthly rule which were expressly repudiated by Jesus Himself" (page 187). Hort in principle reaches the same conclusion as to apostolic functions rather than office and finds this to be true as to all ordination. Of course Hort did not follow up the implications of this result of his studies of the New Testament facts.

In the New Testament the Church is presented in functional relations to God as Father, Son, and Spirit. For God it is the agency through which His righteousness and His "many-sided wisdom" are manifested to all the orders of intelligent beings in the universe; it is His "hope of glory" in the human race, a phrase which appropriates a prominent concept in the Old Testament, one which is practically dominant in many sections of Isaiah. The Church is expressly said to be "the Body of the Christ, the fullness of Him who is fully realizing all things" in behalf of God the Father. In relation to the Christ there are a number of thought forms in which this is presented. Most intimate of all these is that in which the growing Church, as the Body of Christ developing in the course of history, enables Him to attain His complete maturity, "the measure of the stature of a full-grown Man", i.e., the Christ fully grown. In relation to the Holy Spirit, the Church is the spiritual body of redeemed believers in which He incorporates Himself to carry on the work which Jesus "began to do and to teach until the day He was received up."

Here, in its relation to God, is the beginning point for the functional study of the Church, as also of all churches. Then, in the light of the consistent and exclusive emphasis of Jesus on the "Kingdom of God" as His objective and concern, the Church must be studied in its functional relation to this Kingdom. After this comes necessarily the function of organized churches to their own constituency, their membership which is to be related to and equipped for their place in the Church as the working institution of the Kingdom of God. These churches must interpret their duty to their own membership in the light of constituting, "together with all the saints," the Church of God, of Christ Jesus.

It is quite clear that the Church, and all the churches through which the Church immediately functions, have relations to the world, and so have a responsibility for the world, as it is, and in ideal; to the community, both local and world-wide. This involves consideration of the function of the organized church to all the institutions of social organism, family, school, state, economic and industrial institutions.

There is obvious bearing in all this on the attitudes and methods of churches in maintaining unity and order. Specifically the question of Church and State should be developed definitely from the standpoint of the function of the Church in relation to all human instititions.

It seems now to be generally agreed that all forms of church polity have their germ in the New Testament. This claim is in any case a reading backward of our modern conditions into the first century situation. It calls for far more critical investigation than it seems to be getting in current discussions. It is more an apologetic resort than a research conclusion. Flew is quite right in saying (page 263) that clearly the New Testament was far less concerned with form than with spirit and function. He emphasizes - but inadequately - that the lists of "gifts of the Spirit in Ephesians 4 and First Corinthians 12, indicate 'functions' rather than 'offices'." He rightly minimizes "ordination", but, as usual, holds back from the full truth of the New Testament facts.

All aspects of this whole subject should be approached from the standpoint of the spirit rather than the letter. The New Testament states and exhibits the principles, and the New Testament forms were in type determined by these principles; and they are what must be preserved in the form of the churches of history if they are to be loyally Christian, loyal to its aim and its origin.

Notes: One of the ablest and most complete discussions in this field, but characteristically American, is Democracy in the Church by Heermance (Pilgrim Press, 1906). He has a good section dealing with the function of the church; but it is incorporated under the head, "The Four Essentials of a Church." For what is commonly suggested by "the Church" he uses the phrase "Visible Brotherhood." The Baptists, whom he treats with understanding, he classes as "radical Browmists," whereas his own Congregationalists were "not Browmists at all but Barrowsists". He outlines the Congregational polity in terms almost exactly paralleling Dargan's framing of the Baptist polity. When these two volumes were produced (within three years) the tide of democracy was at its full, and few were aware that an ebb was about to set in which has not yet ceased to flow out. Centralization in politics and economics is closely related to totalitarian sentiment in the churches. Heermance took a large-minded attitude toward "the United Church of the United States", "into which", he says, "we hope one day to be absorbed".

Nagler, in The Church in History (1929), discerns clearly that "the Church began as a lay institution" and traces the steps by which it became a hierarchy. He presents no adequate idea concerning its function and the bearing of function on form; nor does he interest himself in this approach.

Clarence T. Craig

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE CHURCH

20 p 7 - 5/19/40

I. The Idea of the Kingdom of God.

* Kingdom Bilerbeck

The idea of the kingdom of God roots in the Old Testament though that phrase is itself infrequent. It is almost never used in the Talmud where it is replaced by "the coming aeon," "Gan Eden," or "life." It is to be found in the Jewish prayers of the Tannaite period and also in the Targums. It means the kingly rule or dominion of the God who is believed to be the sole God of the universe.

Since all names applied to God are necessarily derived from social experience, it is not strange that king is probably not used before the time of the actual kingdom in Israel. Jewish ideas relative to the kingship of God naturally passed through the stages of development of their religion. We are concerned here not with a detailed reconstruction of those ideas, but with the resultant conceptions held before the beginning of the Christian era. Three different aspects of the kingship of God may be isolated: (1) it was an eternal fact; (2) it was a present manifestation in the lives of men; (3) it was a consummation still to come in the future.

God, the creator of heaven and earth, was king in the world he had made. In Daniel we read, "His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom and his dominion is from generation to generation." (4.2) Enoch records the liturgical expression, "Praise be Thou, O Lord and King, great and mighty in thy greatness; Lord of the whole creation of the heavens; King of Kings and God of the whole world." (84.2) This continues such Psalm words as "Jehovah hath established his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all." (103.19)

But the perfect rule of God was no longer found on earth. Men had rejected him since the flood and it was confined to the heavens above. His sovereignty was reestablished on earth when Jehovah became the king of Israel. But as a result of her sin, the kingdom was taken away from Israel and she was subjected to the nations. The kingship of Jehovah was not completely removed. Where men give loyalty, trust and obedience to God, there is his rule to be found. The Rabbis believed that whenever a pious Jew recited the Shema or fulfilled the Torah, he was "taking upon himself the yoke of the kingdom."

But as long as sin and suffering were rife, as long as God's people suffered under the heel of heathen powers, the dominion of God was incomplete. An increasing dualism had come into the later Jewish thought. There were fallen angels as well as sinful men and countless demons peopled the world. A kingdom of evil stood in the way of any completed reign of God. In many passages they look forward to its completed consummation when "Jehovah shall be king over all the earth" (Zech. 14.9). "And the kingdom and the dominion and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High. (Dan. 7.27)" "Then will his government appear over all his creatures; then will the devil have an end and sorrow be done away." (As. Moses 10.1)

This future consummation of the reign of God practically coalesces with the so-called "messianic hope" of the Jews. This was not primarily the hope of a coming messiah, or anointed one. It was the restoration of the rule of God and his people. The number of passages where the government is delegated to a human king of the house of David is relatively small in the O. T. Though there was wide variety in the later Jewish hopes, certain main lines of development are clear.

In the earlier prophetic hope they looked for a restoration in Palestine, or at least on earth, of a kingdom which would be a compensation for their former miseries. First in Daniel is there a sharp separation between this age and the age to come, because there we find the hope of a resurrection of the dead. Participation in the coming reign would not be a prerogative of the last generation alone, but many would be raised up to join in it. Here the kingly rule is presented in terms of conditions of life which are quite transformed. In some of the apocalyptic literature the hope is of Paradise, or a heavenly Jerusalem, or some other form of transcendental salvation. In others it is of a transformed earth.

Practically no messianic words are preserved from Rabbis preceding the national catastrophe in 70 A.D. The teaching preserved from the later Rabbis agrees with IV Ezra and II Baruch in a double form of hope. Between this age and the age to come, which are separated by the resurrection and the judgment, fall the "days of the messiah." This was to be an earthly period aptly characterized as "the Jewish good time." This provided a compromise between national dreams of glory and power and the more developed religious conceptions of salvation as a state not bounded by earthly limitations. Christian applications of this belief in two periods of future bliss are to be found in Paul (I Cor. 15.23 f.) and in the Apocalypse of John, where the duration of this intermediate period is put at 1000 years.

When Jesus used the kingdom of God in the eschatological sense, did he refer to "the days of the messiah" or "the age to come"? There is only one passage in the synoptic gospels which suggests two periods. In Mark 10.29-30 a reward is promised to those who have suffered for the sake of the gospel which they are to receive "in this time"; in the age to come they will obtain eternal life. The probability is that "this time" refers to the brotherhood in the church for the promise includes persecutions. It is less likely that the preaching of Jesus dealt with the "days of the messiah" as portrayed in the later rabbis than with "the age to come."

All Jews were in agreement that the kingship of God must come through the act of God. The consummation of his rule would come through his saving power. The word "social" is fully applicable to the kingdom if we use it in contrast to the taking of isolated individuals home to heaven. It was a social hope in that a new society would come among men. It was not social, however, in the sense of a program of social reconstruction. It was not a human project, but God's salvation.

II. Synoptic Teaching on the kingdom of God.

The subject of the preaching of Jesus was the "good news of the kingdom of God." Matthew usually avoids the use of the divine name and speaks of "the kingdom of heaven." Sometimes it is shortened to "the kingdom." No distinction is to be drawn among these various designations. The evangelists often use the phrase as a description of the message of Jesus without any indication as to its exact nature (Matt. 4.23; 9.35; 13.19; 24.14; Lk. 4.43; 8.1; 9.11).

Six times the word "kingdom" is put on the lips of others than Jesus (Mk. 11.10; Matt. 3.2; 20.21; Lk. 14.15; 23.42; 23.51). While these would represent usages familiar to the evangelists, they would not necessarily agree with the conceptions intended to be ascribed to Jesus. Also, many of the words ascribed to Jesus by the evangelists probably represent later developments rather than actual words of the historic Jesus. Stress upon the delay of the kingdom (Lk. 19.11) and connection with apocalyptic signs of the end (Lk. 21.31) reflect a

later time as do probably the most explicit words showing repudiation of the Jews (Matt. 21.43).

There is no uniformity among the evangelists in the occasions where the word kingdom is used. Only Matthew ascribes its use to John, the Baptist (3.2). Luke has the word contrasting those who "do" and those who say "Lord, Lord," but does not relate it to the kingdom (6.46). Matthew speaks of "entering into life" in 18.9 rather than "the kingdom" as the Markan text read. On the other hand, he changes "glory" in Mark 10.37 to "kingdom." It is clear from this that no purely linguistic study can isolate the teaching of Jesus about the kingdom for various synonyms were used.

The most characteristic form of teaching on the part of Jesus was the parable. Eleven times parables are introduced by some such phrase as "the kingdom of heaven is like." Two of these are in Mark (4.26.30); one of these and an additional parable are in passages to be assigned to "Q" (Matt. 13.31,33); the other eight are peculiar to Matthew (13.24; 13.44; 13.45; 13.47; 18.23; 21.1; 22.2; 25.1). Particularly in Matthew does this appear to be a stock formula. He uses it not only to introduce the parables which he adds in chapter 13 to the collection in Mark, but likewise in his parables of grace and judgment. In the similar parables in Luke the phrase is never used. If the central message of Jesus concerned the kingdom of God, Matthew apparently thought that any part of it might be described as a parable of the kingdom, whether that was an illustration of forgiveness as the mark of true repentance, or a story showing that entrance was due to grace, or an illustration of the rapid spread of the message. We should make certain in our interpretation of any of these parables just how it is related to that kingdom.

Mark summarizes the message of Jesus as a call to repentance in view of the imminence of the kingdom of God (1.15). According to "Q", the same is the message of the disciples when they are sent out (Lk. 9.2). It is not stated that if men will repent they can then work in cooperation with God for the coming of a new order. That new order was coming whether they repented or not. The only question was whether they would enter. Its coming was to be a central object of their prayer (Matt. 6.10). This kingdom was symbolized by a meal where they would recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob (Matt. 8.11). There were those standing in their midst who would not taste of death until it came with power (Mk. 9.1). On his last night, Jesus said that he would no more drink of the fruit of the vine until he drank it with them new in the kingdom of God (Mk. 14. 25; Lk. 22.16; 22.29). It would bring the judgment when they would either enter into the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world (Matt. 25.34) or be cast into outer darkness.

On the one hand, entrance into this kingdom was a gift of God's grace to the little flock (Lk. 12.32). It was promised to the poor, not the rich (Lk. 6.20); to the persecuted, not the fortunate (Matt. 5.10). Not the wise scribes but the children and the childlike had the qualifications necessary for entrance (Mk. 10. 14-15), for these can only receive. Hence the parables of grace could rightly be described as parables of the kingdom.

On the other hand, the kingdom should be the supreme objective of striving on man's part (Matt. 6.33). It was better to sacrifice an eye or a hand and enter the kingdom than to go into the Gehenna of fire (Mk. 9.47). Some had even become eunochs for the sake of the kingdom (Matt. 19.12). The rich could enter only by a miracle (Mk. 10.25). Fine words without obedience would be of no avail (Matt. 7.21), for the righteousness of those who enter the kingdom of God must exceed that of the Pharisees (Matt. 5.20). Once undertaken, there is no

turning back (Lk. 9.62). Just as a pearl merchant would make any sacrifice for a fine specimen, and anyone would sell all he had to buy a field in which lay a great treasure, so entrance into the kingdom was worth any sacrifice which a person could make (Matt. 13.44,45). Such were the violent who were taking it by storm (Matt. 11.12).

In the earliest traditions there stands a whole series of words of a prophetic character which enforce the eschatological message of the nearness of the coming kingdom and the judgment which it would bring. Jesus had come to cast fire upon earth (Lk. 12.49) and bring a sharp division among men (Lk. 12.51-53). The men of that generation could not read the signs of the times (Lk. 12.54). If they had, they would get right with their neighbor before it was too late, and they faced the judge (12.57-59). They should not think that they were more righteous than the eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell (Lk. 13.1-5). In the coming judgment they would all perish unless they repented. But they had one more chance, just a little time of respite (Lk. 13.6-9). They should strive to enter the narrow gate for soon the door would be shut (Lk. 13.23-25).

Therefore Jesus weeps over the city of Jerusalem which had continually rejected the prophets sent to her (Lk. 13.34-35) and was soon to be left desolate. Woes are as much a part of the message of Jesus as beatitudes (Lk. 6.24-26). They are not curses but prophetic pronouncements of judgment. They rest on classes of people like the rich and the Pharisees (Lk. 11.38f.). They rest on cities like Chorazin and Bethsaida (Lk. 10.13-15). It would be more tolerable in the coming judgment for the wicked gentile cities than for them. That day would come as unexpectedly as the crisis in the days of Noah and Lot (Lk. 17.26-30). Hence, those who do repent must be watchful and faithful. They must be like servants awaiting the return of their lord, or a householder who cannot anticipate when a thief might try to break into his house (Lk. 12.35-40).

But alongside of these passages which presuppose that the kingdom of God is the new age which will supersede the present age, there are other passages which point to the fact that this kingdom was in some sense already present. Clearest of all is the assertion that the demon exorcisms, which were such a prominent part of the work of Jesus, were a sign of the realized presence of the kingdom (Matt. 12.28). Satan must be bound already if his kingdom is being despoiled. Jesus beheld him already fallen as lightning from heaven (Lk. 10.17). Hence, God's reign had in substance begun. "Blessed are your eyes," for the men of old had not seen this day though they had looked forward to it (Lk. 10.23-24). The fulfillment of the messianic prophecies is seen in the great deeds of Jesus.

The possibility must be held open, therefore, that some of the other words of Jesus refer to this preliminary realization of the reign of God in the work of Jesus and not to the culmination introduced by the great day. When the Pharisees, who asked about the signs of the kingdom, are told that it is "within your midst," it may be a reference to the wonders which they did not understand (Lk. 17.20-21). On the other hand, the context would point to the suddenness of the arrival of the kingdom. The parables of the self-growing seed and of the mustard seed might refer to the spread of the message about the coming kingdom, or to the spread of the reign of God itself, as more and more responded to the call for repentance (Mk. 4.26-32). On the other hand, it is more likely that the comparison lies in the contrast between the small beginning and the great ultimate result; that is the point upon which our texts lay emphasis. However, dogmatism is undesirable once it is clear that the message of Jesus included both a presence of the kingdom in his work and the proclamation of the nearness of the great eschatological event. But in any case, there would be no long period of slow evolutionary development for the birth-pangs of the new world were already

upon them. If the coming of the kingdom was like the action of leaven (Lk. 13. 20), there was not long to wait.

III. The Church and the Kingdom in the Synoptic Gospels.

While all of these words owe at least their present formulation to the church, there are others which show even more the influence of a time later than the ministry of Jesus. These include many where it is by no means clear whether the reference is to a present community of believers or to the eschatological reign of God. Most of these are found in Matthew. Two developments characterize this gospel. One is an emphasis upon the church which had come, the growing body of believers which had replaced the Judaism which had rejected its messiah. The other emphasis is upon apocalyptic speculation concerning the eschatological event, particularly regarding the punishment of the wicked. The parable of the tares concerns the actual church of the time of the evangelist, and looks forward to the judgment which will bring the ultimate division among men (Matt. 13. 24-30; 36-43). The parable of the drag-net is given a similar apocalyptic conclusion, though the story may have originally referred to the diversified audience to which Jesus brought his message of the kingdom (Matt. 13.47-50).

When the question is asked about the greatest in the kingdom (Matt. 18.1,4) does this refer to the present church or the future consummation? In which is the low position of the one who breaks the least commandment? (Matt. 5.19) From which is John the Baptist excluded (Matt. 11.11)? To which does Peter hold the keys (16.19)? From which are the scribes shutting men out (23.14)? Do the harlots and publicans enter ahead of the Pharisees into a present body of believers or into the future consummation? (21.43) From which is that scribe not far away who assents to the two great commandments as the sum of the law (Mk. 12.34)?

The proper answer is of course both. Even Matthew does not think in terms of the institution of a church which is to continue down the centuries. The body of believers who had a certain amount of organization for discipline and instruction was the remnant of the true Israel which should inherit the kingdom. The church was the interim body which was prepared for the kingdom of God. With his moralistic aims, Matthew knows a judgment upon the church as well as upon the world, but there is direct continuity between the kingdom as found in the developing community and the perfected reign of God beyond the judgment whose imminence Matthew was so eager to stress.

The answer has already been given in substance to the question as to whether or not Jesus intended to found a church. His message dealt with the coming kingdom of God, and the preparation of men and women for entrance into that kingdom. Those who responded to his summons were not organized into separate worshipping communities. Jesus continued to attend synagogue and temple worship to the very end of his life. His work was dedicated to the gathering of a faithful, repentant remnant, which might have included all Israel, but which in fact embraced only a few.

In only two passages does the word ecclesia (church) occur in the gospels. Matthew 18.16 clearly has in mind a later separate Christian community with machinery for the discipline of its members. However, Matthew 16.18 might be understood as the body of believers waiting for the new age. The gates of hell cannot prevail against the church of Christ for it will not go down in the judgment; it is the nucleus for the new order. As we shall see in a later section, this passage gives later Antiochian tradition inserted by Matthew into the original Markan account and is distinctly secondary. However, there is no

reason why Jesus may not have used some Aramaic equivalent of ecclesia, for the idea is implicit in his reported utterances. That would not mean a legal and cult institution, such as we understand by the word "church," but the faithful remnant waiting for God to send his completed reign.

IV. The Idea of the Church in the New Testament.

As we turn to the development of the idea of the church within the New Testament, it should be clear that our study is not of any one particular word. Much has been written on the meaning of the Hebrew word Qahal, which was usually translated in the LXX in the books after Deuteronomy by the Greek ecclesia. The Hebrew word meant the people of God called out in solemn assembly, or ideally so considered. The Greek word meant only a political assembly. All of its special religious significance comes through the usage of the LXX. What we have to deal with in the New Testament is an entire concept and not primarily a word. The people of God were not the Jews as such, but those Jews and later gentiles as well, who looked to Jesus as the messiah through whom God's salvation was to come. To others, they were the "sect of the Nazarenes"; to themselves they were the holy people of God. It is quite erroneous to refer to them as "cults of Jesus." They were not scattered cult communities who worshipped the Lord Jesus instead of some other Lord. They were God's people of the new covenant, united from the first by the certainty that they were fellow-heirs of the coming salvation.

The word ecclesia is used with various shades of meaning in the New Testament. It may refer to the Christians living in one place (I Cor. 4.17), to their gathering together for worship (I Cor. 11.18) or to small house communities (Rom. 16.5). On the other hand, it is used of the church universal (I Cor. 6.4); it may be referred to either as the church of God (I Cor. 1.2) or the church of Christ (Gal. 1.13). The creedal adjectives, holy and catholic, are never applied to the church within the New Testament, though Christians are individually and collectively referred to as "the saints" (agioi).

There can be no doubt that the idea of the church was not an abstraction from local, voluntary associations. Since it was the nucleus of the coming kingdom, the unity was primary. Each local group of those waiting for the manifestation of Christ might be referred to as the church. But these groups did not have complete local autonomy for their development. The church at Corinth was not to make its own decisions independent of the point of view of the other churches. No distinction was drawn between the visible and the invisible church. While it was not a legal body, nor is there any probability of formal church records, the Christians were joined by very visible sacraments of baptism and the community meal.

But the idea of the church was much wider than the word ecclesia. That is never found in either I Peter or the gospel of John, and yet these are among the most churchly writings in the entire New Testament. When I Peter calls his readers "an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession" (2.9-10) he is applying a whole series of Old Testament prerogatives to the Christians. John speaks of the one fold into which Christ's sheep are united (10.16); the farewell prayer of the Johannine Christ is for the unity of all those who believe through the word preached by the disciples (17.21). James describes their assembly as a synagogue (2.2). Despite Paul's fondness for the term ecclesia he can just as well call Christians the Israel of God (Gal. 6.16) or seed of Abraham (Gal. 3.29) or some other expression for the people of God.

For various reasons the term koinonia has attracted attention among some modern students. Within the New Testament it is never a name for the church, but rather a mark of the church. It is doubtful if the Greek word should ever be translated "fellowship." It means participation in something, or partnership with someone. The church was not simply "a fellowship," but a group which participated in certain definite blessings. Sometimes it is Christ (I Cor. 1.9); sometimes it is the Spirit (II Cor. 13.13); sometimes it is God himself (I John 1.3). This establishes a koinonia one with another (I Jn. 1.7) which leads to financial sharing within this brotherhood (Rom. 15.26; Heb. 13.16; II Cor. 8.4; 9.13). Those who shared in the same spiritual blessings shared also in their material resources. Once, in Acts 2.42, the word koinonia is used without any genitive or defining phrase following it. The believers continued steadfastly in four things and one of them is the koinonia. That does not mean that the "fellowship" was a name for their group. It was a short expression for the new partnership with Christ and the community of goods within the group. + partnership in a community the Kingdom - Paul.

Three metaphors are prominent in the New Testament as descriptions of the nature of the church. It was first of all a building built on the foundation of Jesus Christ (I Cor. 3.10 f.). Ephesians includes the apostles and prophets in the foundation, calling Christ the chief corner-stone (Eph. 2.20). The result is the true temple of God in which his Spirit dwells.

But the church is not so much a dead LIVING TEMPLE object which is built as a divine organism. It is not simply a body; it is the body of Christ (I Cor. 12.27; Ro. 12.5). Just as the body needs many different organs, so the church has a place for varied gifts of the one Spirit of God. In Colossians we find the beginning of speculation about Christ as the head of the body (1.18) which is further developed in the Epistle to the Ephesians (4.12 f.; 5.23).

In the gospel of John, these two figures are united. The Temple at Jerusalem is to be destroyed but a new temple is to be raised up which is his body (2.19-22). In typical Johannine dialogue with its double meanings, this refers both to his own resurrection body and the church. The new temple is the Christian church, founded on the belief in the resurrection of its Lord.

In the third figure, the church is the bride of Christ. This metaphor, which Paul applies in II Cor. 11.2, is first developed extensively in Ephesians. The relationship of the wife to the husband should be that of the church to Christ, subordination and obedience. In turn, Christ has loved the church and given himself for her. Here the idea is that Christ redeems the church rather than founds it. In Revelation, the new Jerusalem is the birde, the wife of the Lamb (21.9).

V. The Leadership of the Church.

Was there any centralized leadership of the church during the period of waiting for the consummation of the salvation? In view of the wide gaps in Luke's information concerning Christian beginnings, that is difficult to say with certainty. When is Luke-Acts reflecting the conditions of the time of its composition, and when does it faithfully portray the earlier conditions of the Apostolic Age? Developments in Galilee are ignored altogether, but a comparison of the gospel of Luke with Matthew and Mark makes it highly probable that this is due to a tendential point of view of Luke. The Apostles headed by Peter and John are the undisputed leaders at Jerusalem according to the picture which he draws of the beginning. Though he describes the selection of seven as subordinate to them, in the events which follow, they actually appear as the leaders of a separate Hellenist group (Acts 6.3; 6.8 f.). Though the persecution which fol-

lows their more radical message does not fall upon the apostles (Acts 8.1) the churches which develop in Samaria, and as far away as Antioch, are presented as under the supervision of Jerusalem (8.14; 11.22).

While many critical scholars have looked upon this as a later ideological construction, a good case can be made out for its essential historicity. The Jerusalem community may well have thought that they had a primacy, particularly if the new kingdom was to be set up there. As independent a figure as Paul apparently takes for granted that a dispute endangering the unity of the church will be settled at Jerusalem. There was where the pillars of the church were to be found (Gal. 2.2). Whether or not Acts is correct in having a letter sent from Jerusalem to the communities in Syria or Cilicia (Acts 15.22 f.), it is clear from Paul's letters that the word of James had authority far outside Jerusalem (Gal. 2.11). The collection, to which Paul devoted so much attention, was not simply for "poor" Christians. The Macedonians were very poor. It was for the saints at Jerusalem to whom they owed a spiritual debt (Rom. 15.26).

Holl drew a sharp distinction between the idea of a church which found its unity in a common dependence upon the fountain-head of tradition about the earthly Jesus (at Jerusalem), and the Pauline view in which the tradition about him is subordinated to the presence of the living, risen Christ in all parts of his body, the church. Though the contrast may be exaggerated, the point of view contains much of truth. Our sources do point to claims of a central earthly authority at a very early time. There is no evidence of machinery to enforce this thoroughly. But since the one church was inherent in the eschatological origins of Christianity it was natural that claims for leadership should be more or less successfully advanced.

The supremacy at Jerusalem was clearly in the hands of James, the brother of Jesus (Acts 15.13 f.). After his death, it continued in the family for some time. Just how and when the transition took place from leadership by disciples of Jesus to a dynasty of his family we have no means of knowing. But there are several sections in our gospel materials which show that there were Christians who resisted it. The pericope ascribing the leadership to Peter, which Matthew inserts into the Caesarea Phillip incident, is the most prominent of these (Matt. 16.18). The most probable theory is that it comes from the bi-lingual community at Antioch. It was in circulation at least before 50 A.D. In writing to a church which had a Petrine faction, Paul insisted that Christ was the one foundation upon which the church rests. He seems to be repudiating the Matthean tradition. (I Cor. 3.11)

The interpretation of these words to Peter has been hotly contested because of the Roman claims which have been based upon them. What is meant by the rock on which the church is built? The only way in which it can be taken as if it were the confession rather than Peter himself would be to accept Billerbeck's theory that there was a mistranslation of the original Aramaic. He would make the original read, "I say unto you, Peter, upon this rock (your confession) I will build my church." But this loses the parallelism to Peter's confession. In one sense the word is strictly true, for Peter was the first to receive an appearance of the risen Christ and that moment has a better right than Pentecost to be described as the birthday of the church.

As the various groups of Christians settled down into the world, their organization naturally became more formal, and a more definite officiary developed. To discuss the relationship between apostles, prophets, teachers, and evangelists to such officials as elders or presbyters, bishops, and deacons

would lead us too far afield. Uniformity of organization does not appear to have existed, either in names for officials or in duties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and patterned after other organizations with which they had had some experience, the members of the apostolic church evolved such forms of organization as met their needs. To go into detail could serve only an historical purpose. As their forms of organization and leadership were developed to meet their needs, so is it with every subsequent period of the church. The natural desire for continuity with the past means in practice, however, that changes lag behind functional efficiency. In some quarters this is supported by the idea that some final form of organization was decreed by Christ to the apostles. Of this, however, there is no actual evidence.

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We may summarize in closing a few aspects of the New Testament conception of the church which may be of most significance to us. The church is the sphere of God's salvation in the present, and is prophetic of his ultimate triumph in the kingdom of God. It is constituted by the revelation of his grace in Jesus Christ. Its message is the gospel of redemptive love. It is marked by the presence of his Holy Spirit with all of its evidences of divine power. It is not a voluntary association of those cultivating certain religious experiences. It is the people who have given allegiance to God in response to his gracious call. It is a body who witness to his rule by their trust and obedience. This church is set in the midst of a world where God's will is not yet done. In one sense, therefore, it is the church militant; it is never the church triumphant, for that would be the kingdom of God, the completed salvation that is yet to come.

Uses of The Kingdom of God, etc. in The Synoptic Gospels

Matthew		Mark	Luke
3.2	Message of John, the Baptist		
4.17		1.15 The kingdom is at hand	
4.23	Gospel of kingdom		4.43
5.3	Beatitude on the poor		6.20
5.10	Beatitude on the persecuted		
5.19	One who breaks commandments is least in		
5.20	Righteousness exceed Pharisees if enter		
6.10	Lord's prayer		11.2
6.33	Seek kingdom first		12.31
7.21	"Lord" sayers not enter		
8.11	Recline with Abraham in		13.28-29
9.35	Gospel of kingdom		
10.7	Disciples preach nearness		9.2
11.11	Least greater than John		7.28
11.12	Violent take by storm		16.16
12.28	Demon exorcisms sign of presence		11.20
13.11	Mystery given to some	4.11	8.10
13.19	Interpretation of sower		
		4.26 Parable of self-growing seed	
13.24	Parable of tares		
13.31	Parable of mustard seed	4.30	13.18
13.33	Parable of leaven		13.20
13.38,41,43	Interpretation of parable of tares		
13.44	Parable of treasure in field		
13.45	Parable of pearl merchant		
13.47	Parable of drag-net		
13.52	Scribe instructed of kingdom	Must not look back	9.62
		Preaching good news of K.	8.1
		Introducing feeding of 5000	9.11
16.19	Give Peter keys of kingdom		
16.28	Not die till arrive	9.1	9.27
		Father gives to little flock	12.32
18.1, 4	Who is greatest in		
		9.47 Better to enter with one eye	
18.23	Parable of unmerciful servant		
		Eat bread in kingdom	14.15
		Comes not with observation	17.20-21
19.12	Become eunochs for kingdom		
19.14	Composed of the children	10.14	18.16
18.3	Receive as a child	10.15	18.17
19.23	Hard for rich to enter	10.23-24	18.24
19.24	Easier for camel	10.25	18.25
20.1	Laborers in vineyard		
		Disciples thought come at once	19.11
20.21	Sons of Zebedee ask chief seats		
		11.10 Kingdom of our Father David	
21.31	Publicans and harlots enter first		
21.43	Taken away from Jews and given to others		
22.2	Parable of wedding feast		
		12.34 Scribe not far from	
23.14	Scribes shut from men		
23.14	Gospel of kingdom preached to all nations		
		Signs of nearness of kingdom	21.31
25.1	Parable of ten virgins		
25.34	Promise in last judgment		
		Not eat till then	22.16
26.29	Not drink till then	14.25	22.18
		Kingdom the Father gave	22.29-30
		Thief asks to be remembered	23.42
		Joseph looking for	23.51

THE AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

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"The sense in which the New Testament is normative for the doctrine of the Church". *

By Principal F. S. Mackenzie, D. D.
The Presbyterian College, Montreal

A norm may be conveniently defined as an authoritative standard. The question to be discussed, therefore, is whether the New Testament provides any such standard which must remain permanently to mark the doctrine of the Christian Church, and if so, what that standard is.

We may begin with a statement which will be assented to by all Christian people, and which really brings us to the heart of the whole matter. The Christian Church, in every age, both in its thought and in its practice, must have regard to what Christ himself desired, and must be obedient to what He has commanded. Thus far there will be no difference of opinion. If all were agreed that He had in mind an organized society which would perpetuate his gospel in the world, and that He made any kind of definite provision regarding its constitution, the problem would be comparatively simple. At this point, however, sharp differences of opinion emerge, due partly to the fragmentary nature of the information available, and partly to different exegetical principles which may be applied in studying the New Testament material.

In any case, the historical method of New Testament interpretation is essential. The documents of the New Testament must be tested by the same canons of literary and historical criticism as are applied to any other writings, and the value of their testimony must be estimated accordingly. The full acceptance of this method of interpretation is of the first importance; and there is no doubt that it serves to complicate the problem, so far as the

* A paper prepared for the meeting of the Committee in New York City on May 31st and June 1st, 1940

normativeness of the New Testament is concerned. The ultimate norm for Christian people, not only with respect to their doctrine of the Church, but in all matters affecting their faith, is Christ himself, and the New Testament is of value in the witness that it bears to Him. Inasmuch as the New Testament is our primary source of information about Christ, it has certainly a unique value for Christian people, but the precise measure of that value is something which must be determined by careful and thorough criticism.

There is no doubt that after the death of Jesus, his followers established some kind of fellowship among themselves, and that this society was the beginning of the Christian Church as we know it. In that earliest community, the Apostles were naturally the recognized leaders, but as the number of the converts increased and their influence was extended over a wider territory, other measures were taken to provide adequately for the oversight and instruction of the Christian communities, and thus something like a system of ecclesiastical organization gradually came into being. The details of the process are obscure and the evidence in many respects is inconclusive, but it is a fair inference from the evidence available that uniformity in the matter of organization and government came about as a gradual development, - that the Church was not organized from the beginning according to any prescribed form regarded as of divine authority and therefore binding upon the Church for all time, but that it developed its own form of organization in a perfectly natural fashion, influenced no doubt by its environment and traditions, and stimulated in its effort to achieve a compact uniformity in this respect by the pressure of persecution. Streeter's conclusion on this point is fully justified by the evidence. "In the Primitive Church", he says, "there was no single system of Church Order laid down by the Apostles. During the first hundred years of Christianity, the Church was an organism alive and growing - changing its organization to meet

changing needs. Clearly in Asia, Syria, and Rome during that century the system of government varied from church to church, and in the same church at different times. Uniformity was a later development, and for those times it was perhaps a necessary development." (Streeter: The Primitive Church, page 267.)

The obvious inference therefore is that the Apostles had received no instruction in these matters from their Lord. Whether Jesus himself shared the universal expectation of his first followers regarding the immanence of his own return or not is uncertain, but at any rate, He must have given some thought to the fate of his cause in the world after his death, whatever may have been his personal views as to the length of time which would elapse before the end. The clearest indication that He did actually concern Himself about this matter was his training of the twelve, who were to carry on his work in the power and inspiration of his Spirit. They constituted the original ministry of the Christian Church, though the precise relation between this original apostolic ministry and the later threefold ministry of bishops, presbyters and deacons is a very debatable question. Some facts, however, seem to be fairly clear. In the first place, as has already been observed, the Apostles did not consider themselves as being under any definite orders in matters of church government and organization. And furthermore, while they themselves were the universally acknowledged leaders, and while they accepted this responsibility, they did not assume any peculiar authority over the membership of the Church by virtue of this office, not to speak of transmitting such authority to their successors. "Whatever power and authority the Church of Christ possesses in gift from the Lord resides in the membership of the Church and not in any superior rank of officials who have received an authority over the Church directly from Christ Himself." (Lindsay: Church and Ministry in the Early Centuries, page 32.)

The New Testament Church, whatever variation may have been present in different localities, was a democratic institution, whose priesthood was universal, and in which ecclesiastical authority rested ultimately with the people themselves. Later tradition regarding an Apostolic authority derived directly from Christ Himself and made permanent in a regular succession from the Apostles must be estimated in the light of the thought and practice of the earliest times.

Rigid insistence upon any particular form of church organization and government, as if it were something divinely appointed and therefore an essential mark of the Christian Church, is not warranted by the evidence, nor can it claim the authority of the New Testament; and it is fortunate that this is the case. It would be contrary to the whole trend of Christ's teaching and example that He should have prescribed, in stereotyped fashion, the outward form and constitution of his Church. The Church of course must have some form of organization, but this is altogether of secondary significance. The essential matter is not its form but its life. All Christian people regard the Church as a living organism, - not simply an organization devised by men but a divine creation, which because it is divine is destined also to be permanent, and ultimately victorious in the accomplishing of its purpose; and if that continued life of the Church is to be possible at all in a changing world, it must be free to adapt itself to changing conditions as occasion may require.

It may be true that Jesus did not deliberately found a Church. His primary concern was with what He called the Kingdom of God. But the Church, considered as the organized fellowship of his followers, was in any case the natural result of his activity. And He must have taken account of the fact that some sort of visible fellowship among his followers would be a practical necessity if the interests of the Kingdom were to be safegarded. It is the uniform witness of the New Testament that this fellowship is a unity. Whatever variation there may have been in outward form, it was unthinkable that

that there could be more than one Church of Christ. This unity, however, was primarily a unity of faith rather than of organization and practice. The brethren were one in their common relation to Christ and their common possession of His Spirit.

It would appear that from the beginning, converts were admitted to this fellowship by baptism. And this practice has been followed ever since by most branches of the Church. It is not universal, however, and therefore it is a pertinent question whether the witness of the New Testament should be considered normative in this respect, so that it must always remain an essential part of the doctrine of the Church that members be admitted by baptism. Undoubtedly the rite of baptism has the sanction of Christian tradition, but most scholars would agree that it is impossible to secure for it the express sanction of our Lord Himself. The application of recognized historical methods of criticism to the New Testament material has effectively destroyed the earlier confidence that Jesus Himself instituted the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and gave specific instructions that they were to be observed in his Church to the end of time. In the matter of baptism, it would be very natural and obvious for the Apostles, in view of the practice of proselyte baptism which seems to have been well established and with which they must have been familiar, to receive new members into their fellowship by this rite, and to feel that by baptizing them in the name of Jesus, they were acting in full harmony with what He Himself would have desired them to do. Most Christian people feel that the observance both of Baptism and the Lord's Supper is fully in accordance with the mind of Christ, and that these appropriate sacramental rites, hallowed as they are by their use in the Church ever since New Testament times, have a very important religuous value and are altogether worthy of being perpetuated: but it is another matter to claim that even here the New Testament is normative and that the observance of these outward practices must be considered essential in any valid doctrine of the Church. The following is Bishop Barnes' interesting

comment on this particular point: "It is I suppose beyond dispute that practically all independent scholars are agreed that Jesus neither instituted sacraments nor founded a Church. - So slow has been the advance within our own communion of knowledge of critico-historical inquiries into Christian origins that probably a majority, even of the clergy, are today ignorant not only of the arguments by which the conclusion has been reached, but even of the conclusion itself. Yet how its acceptance would simplify the tangled negotiations as to inter-communion which occupy 'faith and order' conferences." (Quoted by Angus, Essential Christianity, page 51.)

The New Testament ought to be considered normative in its idea of the divine origin and nature of the Church, and also in its uniform witness to the Church's unity. This unity to be sure is essentially ideal and spiritual in its nature, and is not to be confused with uniformity in outward form and practice. It is a unity of faith, determined by a common relation to Christ. It is to be expected of course that as members of all branches of the Church come closer to Christ, they will also come closer to one another in mutual respect and fellowship, and there is no ultimate reason why this process should not issue finally in a united Christendom. If this goal is ever to be reached, however, there must be allowed the fullest freedom of opinion and practice, consistent with unquestioned loyalty to Christ Himself. The New Testament does not justify any group of Christian people in putting forward the claim that because they hold to certain ideas in the matter of orders, forms, etc., they constitute the only true Church, and may therefore unchurch others who, with widely different opinions and practices, are equally sincere in their attachment to their own usages, and who are manifestly earnest in their allegiance to Christ. When the spirit of Christ so far prevails in all branches of his Church that Christian people of all communions will recognize one another as brethren in Him, the most formidable obstacle in the way of attaining to the ecumenical goal will have been removed.

Rec'd 11/15/40. 3:30 P.M.

THE AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

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BY WAY OF REVIEW*

by
Professor Harvie Branscomb, Ph.D.
Duke University, Durham, N. C.

The discussions of the Committee at its June meeting may be said to have fallen into two parts. The first of these dealt with the nature and concepts of the early Christian Church, the second, with an effort to define the sense in which the New Testament may be said to be normative for the Church today. Professor Horton's paper on the idea of the Kingdom of God in American Christianity formed the connecting link between the two discussions and furnished the setting for the second.

The first of these discussions was based on the papers of Professors Easton, Craig, and Cadbury. In general, it may be said that these papers, written by an Anglican, a Methodist, and a Quaker respectively, disproved the popular belief that scholars do not agree on matters of Biblical criticism. An underlying agreement on the main issues involved was perhaps the most remarkable aspect of these presentations. These papers and their amplification in discussion brought out the agreement of the New Testament scholars present as to the organic connection of early Christianity with Judaism, the elements of originality or newness in the movement which were even more characteristic, and its generally informal and unorganized character. That varying types of organization could be characterized as primitive was disputed by no one--a point of some importance for this group. As regards Jesus, it was agreed that his message was formulated in terms of the Kingdom of God rather than of the Church, and that this was a concept with more than one aspect. Its primary foci were the belief in the eternal reign of God, creator of heaven and earth, and in the consummation of this divine rule in an eschatological event. All agreed also--that is, if silence gives consent--

*A paper prepared for the meeting of the Committee to be held in New York City on November 15 and 16, 1940.

that Jesus spoke of this Kingdom as in some sense present. There was, however, divergence of opinion as to the nature of this present aspect and as to the emphasis which Jesus placed upon it. ~~Two~~ Three views were advanced: (a) that Jesus regarded the age to come as already dawning and its powers already operative, a view best illustrated perhaps by the saying, "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then has the Kingdom of God come upon you"; (b) that Jesus thought of the Kingdom as present in the sense which can be illustrated from Jewish rabbinic literature, that God's Kingdom exists wherever men acknowledge God's sovereignity and conform their wills to His law; and (c) that the inner group of disciples who shared in the exercise of the divine powers evident in Jesus' work were already in the Kingdom. A decision between these and other possible alternatives was not pushed, the Committee apparently resting content with the statement that "in some sense" Jesus regarded the Kingdom also as present. Nor did there seem to be entire agreement as to the degree of emphasis to be placed upon this element in Jesus' thought. Professor Easton while expressing the view that this was the element which was to "influence the conception of the Church most profoundly" also stated that it "formed no part of his customary public preaching" (p.6).

(2) A more clearly marked difference of opinion developed over the character of the discipleship demanded by Jesus. One view, following Mark's Gospel and the rabbinictradition, regarded formal discipleship as limited to a small group of men only who followed Jesus in the literal manner characteristic of the disciples of the rabbis. These individuals, it was thought, were regarded by Jesus as members of the Kingdom of God already and as the judges in the Great Assize to come. Those who did not qualify for this inner group had to await their salvation in the future (Easton, p.7). The opposing view questioned the rigidity of rabbinic practice at this early date and Jesus' conformity to the pattern in any case. It did not divide discipleship into two definite groups, one with special privileges and duties, limited to men only and regarded by Jesus as constituting the present Kingdom of God. This disagreement was resolved,

however, by common agreement as to the way in which the historical development proceeded. Whatever the facts may have been during the short period of Jesus' life, in the early Church no such distinction obtained. Discipleship was no longer limited to a small group. Even women, Priscilla, for example, could be included.

(3) The issue of continuity versus originality or innovation occasioned some discussion. General agreement however, was reached in the view that the primitive Church was characterized by both continuity and innovation, that its terms and many of its concepts were drawn from its environment but that the new wine which was poured into those older bottles either broke the bottles, or to continue the same figure, stretched them to new shapes scarcely indentifiable with the older forms. Innovation was more characteristic of the movement than continuity. An understanding of the latter, however, is a great aid toward understanding the movement.

(4) Somewhat more difficulty was encountered over the question of the relation of the early Christian communities to each other and to the central organization. A warning was expressed against overstating the authority of the central church. The issue seemed to be one of statement, however, rather than of real alternatives, the unifying forces being admittedly those of common devotion and a sense of a common future rather than organizational and authoritative ones. Rather similar was the question whether Professor Cadbury in emphasizing the loose, amorphous character of early Christian organization had not overstated the absence of a sense of membership. Was there a clear line? If so, what were the external marks? The discussion moved toward the conclusion that the early Church was a group with a common devotion and a belief in the gift of the Spirit to all members, but without uniform tests of membership or external signs.

The Committee thus seemed to be in basic agreement in its understanding of the characterof the early Church. Christ did not organize the Church, but

it grew naturally out of his preaching of the Kingdom of God and of his followers as the ~~heirs of or~~ the possessors of its privileges. It also developed naturally from the common loyalty, devotion and hope of those who accepted his message. The forms of the Church were drawn from its environment, but these were not uniform or in any sense definitive, and were subject to free modification or development under the guidance of the Spirit. The significant characteristics of the early Church were those to be found in its new religious experience and its inner spirit.

The discussion of Professor Horton's paper on Friday evening dealt with other topics than those of the discussions reviewed above. Your reviewer recommends that it be reread subsequently when the study takes up current issues and questions. Saturday's discussion, however, was closely connected with the previous discussion. The leading question raised by the papers of Professors Wahlstrom and Mackenzie was that of the sense in which the New Testament may be said to be normative for the Church. Difficulties were encountered in defining the area in which the New Testament was normative. The suggestion was made that the word "standard" might be more satisfactory than "norm", though standard was equally in need of definition and application. The hour of adjournment arrived with the general question still under discussion. A clearer difinition of and agreement on the sense in which the Bible is authoritative or normative for Christianity would seem to be a working necessity for the further progress of the Committee's study. In view of the underlying agreement evident in the discussion of other matters this would not seem impossible of achievement.

P.M. 11/15/40

THE AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

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Notes on the Doctrine of the Church in the Old Testament and the New *

By
Principal Richard Davidson, D.D.
Emmanuel College, Toronto, Canada

The doctrine of the Church is what the Christian Church thinks and teaches about herself. Among all the doctrines this doctrine is obviously basic. If Christianity has a doctrine about God it is what the Church believes God has revealed to her about himself; if Christianity has a doctrine about redemption it is what the Church believes God has done for her; if Christianity teaches a way of life it is what the Church understands to be God's will for her and for her members; if Christianity has a doctrine of mission in the world it is the mission which she believes God has committed to her. A doctrine of the Church is not merely one section of Christian teaching, and ecclesiology just one of the (later) divisions of Systematic Theology; it is what encompasses the whole. As the Church is itself the condition of there being such a thing as Christian doctrine, so a doctrine of the Church is basic to the whole of doctrine, as it is to cultus and polity. Roman Catholics set the doctrine of the Church in the foreground, and they have good reasons for doing it.

Most of what Christians think and teach to-day about the Church is as old as the New Testament. Of course every man's thinking is of a piece with that of the age in which he lives. Some may be able to pick their way with confidence through the thought and ethos of other ages, but most of us who try to do it catch ourselves from time to time wearing twentieth century chains, unaware of our bondage. It is also true that the categories of thought and the ethos of today are the language in which we must speak of any other. Nevertheless, I believe that when allowance has been made for the foreignness of the first century the fact is that what well-informed Christian people think about the Church to-day

* A paper prepared for the meeting of the Committee to be held in New York City on November 15 and 16, 1940.

is essentially what stands in the New Testament. The early Christians believed in "one, holy, catholic, apostolic Church, the body of Christ, the household and family of God."

Why should we feel most concerned for our relation to the first of all the Christian centuries? We dare not be indifferent to any; there is light and strength and life, as well as warning, to be had from all. But we are surely not wrong in cherishing that first time of rare elevation and balance of life, not wrong in clinging to the skirts of Peter and Paul and John, not wrong in attempting something like what they did, not wrong in committing ourselves to the incomparable Master and Saviour of men. We are answerable directly to God for the present use of both head and heart, but as a matter of fact Christians are always refreshed when they drink at the upper springs to which the New Testament is a sufficient guide.

The roots of the Church's thought about herself are long roots. They reach back beyond the New Testament, and they spread in many directions. A few apparently found nourishment in the Graeco-Roman world; some may be followed far back into primitive times. But most can be traced with a good deal of certainty into the Jewish life of Palestine and the Dispersion, and so into the Old Testament. The following notes are concerned with the Old Testament rootage of the Christian doctrine of the Church. It was for the most part from the Old Testament that the Church learned how to think and talk about herself.

I

We begin with the <u>fact</u> of Israel; what had Israel to say about that? She said that Israel was of God's making, the product of his redemptive work in Egypt and the wilderness. It was God who called Israel into being, and that for himself - Israel is his people. The holy God called her to a close relationship with himself; she is his holy people (Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:19; Ex. 19:6; Jer. 2:2). He called her to a place in his far-reaching purpose. In keeping with his nature and purpose he gave her a way of life (Lev. 19:2).

When she came to think that the elements of her life which were obviously holy (sacrifices, etc.) were God's sole concern with her, and that the rest lay outside his field of interest, he sent his messengers the prophets to call her back, back to the God who had revealed himself at the Exodus (Mic. 6:1-5; Hos. 12:10), back to the totalitarian claims of Sinai. If she went on in her wilful way he must carry her to Egypt again and undo his saving work (Hos. 8:13; 11:5). The God of the Red Sea and Sinai was a righteous God; a God all in earnest; the Israel of the eighth and seventh centuries stood under the judgement of the living God. The terrible "Day of the Lord" was at hand; an end was appointed to Israel.

He was a God of judgement, but he was also a God of mercy, of mercy and tenacious purpose. Israel must be destroyed, but he would save a remnant. What city had ever been destroyed and some of its people not escape? At the Flood God had spared Noah, and so reconstituted the race of men. At Sodom he had saved Lot, and Lot's descendants were Israel's neighbours now. To come nearer home, there were some in Israel whom he might well rescue from the burning, such as Isaiah's little band of disciples, such as Jeremiah's lonely companion Baruch; there would be the nucleus of a new Israel. For God could not be done with a remnant when he had merely saved it. He saved for a purpose; and his purpose with Israel could not at the last be thwarted. He would reconstitute Israel, to inherit the old favour, and to be the instrument of his ancient purpose (Jer. 31:31ff.).

The "Remnant" was a fact as well as a doctrine - an explicit doctrine at many points along the way (Isa. 10:19-22; 11:11,16; 28:5; 37:31f.; 46:3; 2 Ki. 19:31; Jer. 23:3: 31:7; Mic. 2:12; 4:7; 5:5f.; 7:18; Zeph. 2:9; 3:13; Zech. 8:6,12); and a continually recurring fact, in the rain of calamities 586 and 168 B.C., and in the sore discipline of six centuries of subjection and dispersion. Though judgement followed judgement Israel was not blotted out. The "Day of the Lord" with its final and awful reckoning was delayed, but faith affirmed that when it did come a "Remnant" would survive, heir of all the promises, in possession of the new age.

The "Remnant" was not simply "the escaped of Israel" (Isa. 4:2; etc.); that is a vagrant idea, of itself it leads nowhere. As the "Remnant" which God saves it takes on meaning; it takes its place in the long march of his purpose. He saves the "Remnant" to resume his purpose with Israel. This saving act is many times set alongside his deliverance of Israel from Egypt (Isa. 11:18; Jer. 23:7f.; 31:31ff.). The new beginning matches the old beginning, it has the same end in view, a people as his peculiar possession and to do his peculiar work (Ezek. 12:16; 36:22-34; Joel 2:27; Mic. 4:6-8). The purpose becomes deeper and broader as time passes. The new Israel will rejoice in a new freedom from sin (Mic. 7:18; Jer. 31:34; Zeph. 3:13) and a new knowledge of God (Jer. 31:34); the potent spirit of the Lord will come upon her (Joel 2:28-32). Mind and heart and soul will be subdued to God's will (Jer. 31:31ff.; Ezek. 36:26ff.; 37:24ff.). The "Remnant" is to be "gathered" from the ends of the earth (Isa. 11:11ff.; Jer. 23: 7; Mic. 2:12; 5:6f.; Zeph. 2:9; etc.); the new Israel is to be a great and strong people (Mic. 2:12; 4:7), striking root down and bearing fruit above. "The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform it" (Isa. 11:11; 37:32; 2 Ki. 19:31), the drive of the Redeemer-God's firm will.

To the "Remnant" fall the status and condition of God's long purpose for his people. And to the "Remnant" falls also the enlarged task of the new day (any day) after 586. The burden of the message in Isa. 40ff. is that Israel is saved to save. Whether the people are gathered up in the single figure of the "Servant", or the figure of the "Servant" shows the people the way of God's providence, it is clear that the Israel of his purpose has a mission to the world. And the cost of fulfilling the mission is not left in doubt, Israel may go forth to the world and preach - as some think the prophet of those chapters did - but the world will not yield to persuasive speech; it is only suffering, unmerited suffering, suffering to the limit, that will move the nations and turn them to the Lord. The "Remnant" was "a brand plucked from the burning" - that in the first place; but in the second place, it was "a light to lighten the Gentiles."

whose suffering? what is difference between Jesus' suffering today in Antioch's persecutions.

wherein were Israel's suffering unmerited? or does Bonhoeffer apply this to Christ & Church alone?

(It is possible that to these finger-posts which to us who look back seem to point forward to the Church, we should add "the sign of the Son of Man" of Daniel 7. I am at present not sure that Ferdinand Kattenbusch (and, after him, T. W. Manson) are quite wrong in holding that the two entities "Son of Man" and "people of the saints of the Most High" are so closely bound together that in no context of New Testament speech and in no range of New Testament thought can you have the one without the other.)

II

Into a world familiar with these ideas Jesus was born. He lived with his people, a Jew among Jews, sharing the common heritage, and moving with the current of God's long purpose for Israel (cf. Rom. 9:1-5). When John was cast into prison Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent for the Day of Reckoning is at hand; judgement will be given and the new age be inaugurated." By word and deed he set about the gathering of a people whom the Lord would spare on that dread day, a repentant people, who had turned to the Lord, whose sins had been forgiven, who had been brought under the power of the new age, and drawn into the train of God's high purpose, a people fit to inherit all the promises from Abraham down, a people destined to all the privileges and graces that lay beyond - and the world mission. For the new era would commence on that day; and yet in a sense the new era was already there. Those who turned began to live at once under the favour of God and to experience the power of the new age. That is, Jesus was actually gathering the outcasts of Israel, was actually constituting the new Israel before the great Day came. And he sent out preachers to extend his work. When the work was completed and the Day came, those who were thus prepared, those whom God was thus saving, would be just Israel, the Israel of God's age-long purpose.

A revolution was under way; but who could know it? The sequence of events outlined in the previous section belonged to the furniture of men's minds generally; that continuity of past, present, and future was taken for granted.

Jesus might be pre-occupied day and night with the present that then was, but it seems reasonable to believe that his thoughts about the past-and-future setting of his work moved along such lines of prophetic expectation, though here as in other cases (e.g. the term "Messiah") the old words were so inadequate that he could scarcely use them. He did not speak about the Church.

It need not surprise us, therefore, if we never hear of Christians coming together and saying, "Here we are, so-and-so many of us, devoted to a great Teacher, starting a new religion, founding a new society. What shall we call ourselves? Who shall be admitted members with us? Let us appoint a committee to record what He taught us, for He surely never had his equal. Then, every religion has a cultus; we must have one too. Who will devise a cultus for us? And a society must have officers, and their duties and powers will have to be defined. In short, we must have a constitution (and by-laws, of course) setting forth what we stand for, how we are to be organized, and what we are to do as members of this new society, in our meetings, in our private life, in the world. And because so much is involved it will have to be a pretty long document."

If there was no such meeting it was, partly at least, because so much was taken for granted among those men, moved, as they were, to the depths of their nature. There was already in existence the holy community, the people of God, a fact perfectly familiar to all, including Jesus and the first Christians. And that community, within which both Jesus and the first Christians lived, had a doctrine, a cultus, and a polity, familiar to all. I believe that Jesus, like the prophets in their time, intended a new Israel, not indeed another Israel alongside the old, but the old Israel renewed. Before the time came for the separation of Christianity from Judaism Paul saw clearly enough that it was not the children of the flesh that were the children of God, but the children of the promise were reckoned for a seed (Rom. 9:8; compare John the Baptist's words, Mt. 3:7-10; Lk. 3:7-9). Who will say that in this Paul had not the mind of Jesus? When at length the time came for the Church to have its own doctrine, its own

cultus, its own polity, both Paul and his Master would say, "This, not that, is the Israel of God." The Church did not borrow these things from the Synagogue; she had them in herself from the beginning.

The continuity is unmistakable. The first Christians had no new doctrine of God and of man, but the old doctrine of God, Creator, Judge, and Saviour. It took time for them to learn that what God had done for them in Christ necessitated a thorough recasting of the doctrine. They had no new cultus; the temple and the synagogue were there still. But when they were cast out of the one and withdrew from the other they discovered that they had come, almost unconsciously, into possession of a superior cultus. They had no new polity; old habit and new brotherly love were sufficient for a time. Then came more adequate order to match the new exigencies, shaped indeed after Jewish (and sometimes Gentile) patterns, but always growing out of the living tissue of their Spirit-quickened life. In the service of the poor and helpless, and in their moral practice generally, as in doctrine, cultus, and polity, there was a very great deal that was common to Christians and Jews, but the important thing to say about these things as a whole is that they were not borrowed from strangers but were from the first the possession of the Christian community. Even the Holy Scripture was not borrowed. When the Church became aware of herself as an entity distinct from Judaism she did not think of laying the Old Testament aside. It belonged to her, not to the Jews; it contained the title deeds of her inheritance. And she never gave it up, but continues to nourish her life still with that same diet of her childhood.

This is not to belittle the significance of Jesus for a doctrine of the Church, but the contrary. What he said, what he did, all the acts of God that the Gospels tell about, effected radical and far-reaching change. But it took time even for those most affected to learn how revolutionary the change was. They came in time to see that with him began a new era in the history of the world (A.D.). Yes, within a generation man's life was rebuilt from the foundations.

It did not take long for the outline of doctrine to take shape; from Matthew to Revelation the New Testament is an exposition of Christian doctrine, and throughout there is a sense of promise and fulfilment that binds Old and New into one.

But in regard to the Church there is a difference within the New Testament. The books from Acts to the end are Church-conscious; the Gospels (at least the Synoptic Gospels) are not. Why this difference? Why does the idea of the Church count for so little in the Gospels? They were written in an age that was fully Church-conscious. Why should one man's work (Luke - Acts) have much to say about the Church in one half and practically nothing in the other? I dare say that part of the answer is, that the Gospels are, on the whole, authentic documents: they say so little about the Church because Jesus said so little. But why did he say so little? Is it not, partly at least, because he was busy doing the things that produced the Church, not with framing a doctrine about the Church? That may well be the second part of the answer to the question, Why so little in the Gospels?

Christianity is continuous with Judaism. In between stands Jesus Christ. He stands there at the focal point where heaven and earth meet, and he is the focal person through whom the power and purpose of God flow to mankind. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The Christians recalled the old categories of thought and found them now charged with a new content and stretched into new shapes, but with them all he had not words to tell the length and breadth and height and depth of the new life in Christ. Jesus gives us no doctrine of the Church, but he did the thing that made it necessary to have a doctrine. Without him the Church could not be; he came and the Church could not but be.

11/5/40. 8:00 P.M.

THE AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL COMMITTEE ON FAITH AND ORDER

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"THE SENSE IN WHICH THE NEW TESTAMENT IS NORMATIVE FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH".*

By
Rev. Leicester C. Lewis, D.D.
Church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, Philadelphia

I am not clear as to why in the selection of the theme for this paper the doctrine of the Church was singled out for special consideration. It would appear difficult to prove either on the one hand that the doctrine of the Church is such a pre-eminent doctrine that it demands special treatment, or on the other hand that it has such peculiarities in contradistinction to other doctrines, that it is necessary to think of it in "isolationist" fashion. Quite to the contrary, the doctrine of the Church, so far as evidence goes, seems to have developed in about the same informal fashion as did other doctrines and other parts of Christian life. If this be so, then possibly a better way than to attack directly the problem as to how the New Testament is normative for the specific doctrine of the Church, will be to try to understand how the New Testament is normative for any doctrine whatsoever.

I

At the start, I should like to make my own the fine statement of Dr. Mackenzie, in his paper of last spring on this subject: "The Christian Church, in every age, both in its thought and in its practice, must have regard to what Christ Himself desired, and must be obedient to what He has commanded." To that every loyal Christian heart must, without qualification, say Amen. It is when we try to agree as to the <u>means</u> whereby Christian disciples are to find out the will of the Master as to what He desired and what He commanded, that the deep differences among us become evident. Consideration of this unhappy fact leads us directly to the theme of our paper.

It requires distinct mental effort to get the New Testament out of the ecclesiastical picture which its later position created for it. It cannot be too

* A paper prepared for the meeting of the Committee to be held in New York City on November 15 and 16, 1940.

strongly emphasized that the first generations of Christians had not so much as heard that there could be a New Testament. To heirs of Judaism, even in the Diaspora, there could, of course, be only one Testament, or collection of Sacred Books, viz. the Old Testament. Even if Dr. Torrey's view is held, that our Gospels, written in Aramaic, were substantially in circulation soon after the middle of the first century, this by no means connotes anything which we can rightly describe as the idea of a New Testament being prevalent so early as that date. For those not converted by Torrey's arguments, the same judgment is true nearly half a century later.

Even the remark of Papias of Hierapolis in Phrygia about 125 A.D., as to "the logia" which Matthew wrote in Hebrew (Aramaic), (Eusebius, H. E., III, 39) and the explanation of St. Justin Martyr at Rome a quarter of a century later, that at the Christian Eucharistic assemblies, the "memoirs of the Apostles" ... "which are called Gospels", were read, are far too "casual", to use Westcott's word (On the Canon, 4th Ed., p. 108), to justify us in reading back into them the fullness of theological concept which is sometimes ascribed to them.

Nevertheless during the succeeding half-century, or by about the year 200, it is evident that the concept of a distinctly Christian canon of writings had been developed. St. Irenaeus of Lyons about 180, with his quaint teaching that "it is not possible that the Gospels be either more or fewer than they are. For there are ..... four winds" etc. (Adv. Haer., III, 11,8); Tertullian of Carthage about the year 200, with his invoking the authority of the Apostolic Churches for the "evidence" as to orthodox and unorthodox Gospels (Adv. Marc., IV, 5); and St. Clement of Alexandria, shortly after 200, with his "concise explanation of all the Canonical Scriptures" (Euseb., H.E., IV, 14); all these witness to the recognition of some kind of a canon of the New Testament widely prevalent by the end of the second century.

It is generally felt that it was the protracted Gnostic controversy which precipitated this expansion in Christian thought. Indeed it is difficult

to understand how such points as the Gnostics raised could be debated, without forcing the main body of Christians to select and exalt those books which they would consider normative. The more enthusiastically the Gnostics appealed to various "secret" books of hidden wisdom, the more definitely would the Church have to standardize her own mind as to just what books she would allow appeal to be made. This standardization by the Church of her list of Sacred Books not only created an authoritative list, but even more significantly, as Harnack long ago pointed out, it created the idea of a sacred list (Dogmengeschichte, 4te Aufl., Bd.I, p.373). Once this idea had been let loose into the life of the Christian Community, the task of filling in the list was more than half achieved; though, as we know, anything which might be called a final and definitive settlement was not reached until toward the end of the fourth century, if we accept, as is usually done, the proclamations of Athanasius for the East, 373, Damasus for the West, 382, and Carthage for North Africa, 397.

It is well to recall the above familiar facts of history just in order that we may be quite clear that the positing of the New Testament into its historic place in Christian living was not the snap judgment of any ecclesiastical council, nor the brilliant discoveries of Christian scholars. Rather, the idea of a New Testament was the result of a long, ambiguous and stumbling process. To create the idea of the New Testament there was working the diffused and confused mind of Christian believers, and as the stage for this mind of Christians was their life in the Christian Church.

Hence, it is no verbal tour de force, but a sheer statement of historic fact to assert that the question of history was not "how is the New Testament normative for the doctrine of the Church", but rather, "how is the Church normative for the doctrine of the New Testament." If we can trust at all our knowledge of stimulus and reaction in human life, we can be certain that in the late second and early third centuries, the Christian Community would never have approved and canonized earlier writings which, by and large, contradicted the predominant outline of her belief, or the existent ethos of her practice. The stubborness

with which the Epistle to the Hebrews on the one hand, and the Book of the Revelation on the other, were opposed in different localities, is evidence that the Church did not accept into the canon any pious and hortatory work just because some people proposed it. Works received had to earn their acceptance from the approval of the Community, and this approval was based, not upon abstract theological theses, but upon harmony with the Life lived. ?

Rather upon Apostolicity of papers. Authorship by apostles or those sanctioned by them & subject matter in accord with what Christians thought was apostolic.

II

This view, a truism to Catholic scholars, is, I realize, unacceptable to the majority of Protestant scholars, yet I see no way to invalidate it. The old-fashioned attempt to invalidate it, on the ground that all we know of the Early Church is contained in the New Testament, and that therefore the New Testament is primary in any case, will hardly stand the scrutiny of scientific history. We know in fact a great deal about the Christian life during the first two Christian centuries, entirely apart from the text of the New Testament. An enthusiasm for ecclesiastical authority has often blinded us to the simple truth of history, that both the New Testament and the extra-canonical literature are equally manifestations of living and dynamic tradition, vitalizing the life of the Christian Community. The usual position and recognition ascribed to the New Testament in much contemporary theology implies an ecclesiastical framework and theological maturity which, I believe, it would be difficult to prove existent at the time maintained.

why other eliminatio on this ground?

If, however, the historical data force us to say that in the creation of the idea of a New Testament and in the implementing of this idea by specific books, the Church was normative for the doctrine of the New Testament, it is none the less true that with the fuller development of church organization in succeding centuries, the New Testament in a real sense became normative for the Church. This change was due probably to two reasons. The first was that a written reference could more easily and clearly be utilized than the more vague and increasingly dissonant notes in evolving church life. The second reason was the less

admirable tendency of people to feel that a statement or argument becomes more true and more imperative because it is written down. Years ago in Sicily an amusing experience brought this home to me. A monk in Syracuse was showing us over the Church dedicated to St. Paul, and proceeded to say that St. Paul had preached here in Syracuse. At this a member of our party snickered, whereupon the monk turned rather angrily to him with the remark, "But, signor, it is written." I am not blaming the monastic guide for ignoring any questions of historical criticism. I merely point out that to a mentality such as his there was an awe and self-validation in the written word distinctly above that of the word spoken. And probably all of us who are tempted "to believe what we read in the newspapers" have a fellow feeling for him.

Few scholars would hold that the entire New Testament is normative, either logically or ontologically, precisely to the same degree. Few scholars, for instance, would feel the logical coercion of a statement in the Book of the Revelation to be the same as a statement in St. Mark. (Even with apologies to Dom Chapman.) Few scholars would consider words attributed to St. Paul about the cloak which he left at Troas to have the same intrinsic value as those attributed to our Lord, "Suffer the little children to come unto me". One need not amplify such illustrations to become convinced that to scholars of every sort the normativeness of the New Testament requires considerable elucidation and delimitation.

Of course, the above are the merest truisms to thoughtful New Testament scholars, but the result is that each scholar distills from the New Testament that which he adjudges to be probably primary, and then generally proceeds to make this distillation normative for Christians today. I have to say "generally", because obviously that is just what the "Religionsgeschichtliche Schule" did not do. The German scholars of a generation ago such as Bousset and Heitmüller, the French School of the deeply to be lamented Loisy, and the American group of which Dr. Case of Chicago was long the distinguished head, were more consistent in this than many of their confreres. They realized that their principles of judgment

The critic would make himself arbiter, for each decision in some subjective basis to accept or reject what he will.

liquidated any genuinely normative value for the New Testament and they proceeded therefore to remove even the popular "Q" from under this aegis. I cannot but feel that English-speaking Biblical science has largely missed the significance of this body of scholarship. We talk about it and even refer to it, but then proceed to ignore its teaching. We are inclined to accept and apply some elements of its criticism to certain parts of the New Testament, but then we go blithely along either excepting other parts of the New Testament from this criticism or side-stepping other parts of the critical analysis itself.

III

Perhaps this is especially true in regard to the doctrine of the Church. Without doubt, untrammeled historical research shows us how scanty and variant are the data in regard to the ministry of the Church in its first years. No scientific scholar would desire to question this. Dr. Streeter's naive enthusiasm here, as at a new discovery, was surprisingly pathetic. The trouble comes when we refuse to accept and apply a similar rigid criticism to other parts of Christian life. Not only of the doctrine of the Church, but of any one of the doctrines of the Apostles' Creed, the doctrine of the New Testament itself, the doctrines of Christian morality, e.g. war, sex, interest, who will dare to affirm that there has been a clear, undebatable, and static norm for any of them? Yet who is ignorant that each of us, according to our own predilections, most punctiliously scrutinizes certain of the above points, while at the same time others seem to slip through our mesh unscathed?

Selectivism of critic & theologian

Because of the limitation on the length of our paper, this may be the right place to ask in somewhat untheological fashion "So what?" If we are all more or less tarred with this same brush of eclectic scholarship in regard to the New Testament as a norm, what are the implications of this fact? I suggest that we have three choices.

1. We may, with whatever scholarship is at our disposal, dig into the New Testament and find what we can adjudge primary or even Dominical. Having

satisfied our minds as to this, we can declare it to be the Christian norm. The weakness of this approach is, first, the relative isolation and rareness of our personal historical judgment, which even much talk about the "consensus of scholarship" cannot hide. The second objection lies in the truth that by this principle so many questions vital to Christianity, as it actually is and in fact has been, are left unstudied.

2. We may take the New Testament pretty much as we have received it, and claim that the received text is our norm, allowing at the same time for ordinary principles of historical study, such as environment, languages, social needs, etc. The difficulty here would seem to lie in the fact that we ignore in practice the truth which we all admit in theory, viz. that the New Testament as we have it has had a history and that by no means a straight ahead and untroubled history. A further objection is that it attributes to the New Testament as we have it an ecclesiastical and theological sacred position, which it is historically demonstrable it did not always have. ? Did it not have such as soon as its parts were recognized by Christians? Didn't canon grow because appeals were made to its parts?

3. There is a third possibility which I make here diffidently and briefly, both because my own mind is by no means clear in regard to it, and also because it introduces a subject far beyond the scope of this present discussion. This possibility is that we try to come together about, and thrash out some of the fundamental theses in regard to, the evolution of Christian doctrine as a whole. It is true that St. Peter would not have recognized bishops, priests, and deacons as necessary for a valid Church, but it is equally true that St. Paul would not have understood a New Testament as the bond of Christian fellowship, nor would St. James have grasped what was meant by the Apostles' Creed. All, not just some part, all Christian life is a development. There is no Communion on earth, I am sure, which does not admit and approve a doctrinal evolution of some kind. There is hardly a scholar here, I am confident, who would admit and approve the entire validity of any other scholar's theory of development. Yet comprehensibly it is just here that the knife turns, and it is the refusal to face this particular

Is he here advocating Hall's position? "Development"

problem which renders so much theological discussion futile.

It is ninety-five years since John Henry Newman issued his Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine. This was fourteen years before Charles Darwin gave to the world his Origin of Species. Since 1859 there has been a continued and most profitable discussion of the fundamental principles of natural evolution. Not only the data of evolution, as presented by the best investigations of natural science, have been studied, but the interpretation of these data into something like general principles of evolution, has been the subject of prolonged thought. One thinks immediately of deVries, of Weismann, and of Osborn. With the exception of Loisy's famous answer, L'Evangile et L'Eglise, 1902, and my own revered teacher Adolf von Harnack's Das Wesen des Christentums, 1900, I know of few modern theologians who have seriously tried to come to grips with this question, except certain Roman Catholic scholars who have seen the problem and tried valiantly to solve it. I think of Reginald Schultes, a Dominican, with his Introductio in Historiam Dogmatum, Paris, 1922; Francis Marin-Sola, with his two good-sized volumes L'Evolution homogène du Dogma Cathlique, Freiburg in der Schweiz, 1924; Cardinal Alex Lépicier, with his Tractatus de Sacra Doctrina, Rome, 1927; and Louis Grandmaison, Le Dogme Chrétien, Paris, 1928. Roman Catholic scholars are unfortunately limited by their obligations to recent Papal decisions, yet it is significant that they have at least seen the need for consideration of this problem of development. Time without end, it is pointed out that our brother's interpretation is vitiated because of some phase of development for which he has not allowed. How very frequently do any of us clearly proclaim what principles of development we ourselves accept, and offer ourselves to be cross-questioned upon them? Yet no one of us repudiates all.

Hence in summary, to answer the question of our title, the New Testament is normative for the doctrine of the Church, or for any other doctrine, in that the New Testament writings present a selection from the earliest Christian literature which was felt to be in harmony with the life of the Christian

Fellowship at the end of the second century. This statement rests in the domain of history. Its evaluation will depend upon our dogmatic presuppositions. When the Church conceived the idea of the canon, she felt that she was guided by the Spirit of Jesus, and that thus the judgment of the Spirit-guided Church was to be trusted. If we deny this premise, then the New Testament tends to become hardly more than a stimulating quarry for literary archeologists. If we accept this premise, the New Testament writings become vibrant with the throbbing compulsion of living Christian tradition, tradition which in hard fact wrote them, selected them, and has preserved them. In St. Augustin's old phrase, Securus judicat orbis terrarum.

Reformed position?

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"The Concept of the Church as Affected by the Underlying Theological Viewpoint" *

By

Professor Harris Franklin Rall, D.D.,
Garrett Biblical Institute, Evanston, Illinois

The doctrine of the Church cannot be adequately discussed if taken by itself, whether the approach be biblical, historical, or theological. Nor is it sufficient to consider separately certain selected doctrines on which there are marked confessional differences, as Edinburgh discussed grace and the Word of God, the ministry and sacraments. While the necessity for such studies is obvious and it is clear that they present a good point at which to begin, it becomes increasingly evident that there are underlying viewpoints which are determinative in each case of the position taken, and that these backlying differences must be explored and their significance brought to light. Only thus can we understand each other and only thus can our differences ever be composed.

The purpose of this paper is to bring out some of the underlying problems which must ultimately be faced. The indication of the problems will be the chief aim, though this will inevitably involve some consideration of the issues and of the opposing positions. Three questions in particular must be considered, the answers to which condition the approach to the doctrine of the Church: the problem of authority, the question of the essential nature of the Christian religion, the conception of God and his relation to the world.

I. The Question of Authority

The problem of authority requires first consideration. That is obvious in connection with the proposed biblical studies. After we have established what is the Old Testament teaching, or that of the New Testament, or the teaching of Jesus (if we can) or of Paul, or the form of organization in the Apostolic Church

* A paper prepared for the meeting of the Committee in New York on May 31st and June 1st, 1940.

(if there was one form), or the teaching as to the relation of the kingdom of God and the Church, what then? The common assumption is that we have something authoritative here. But as soon as we seek to draw conclusions the problems appear. Is there agreement in all parts? If not, where do we turn? To Christ? If so, does that mean the teachings of Jesus, or the Christ of New Testament faith? (THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS IS the Spirit of prophecy.) And are we to stop with the Scriptures and the Church of the first century? More basic still: What do you mean by authority in religion? Is it a matter of ideas embodied in teaching, or standards disclosed in practice? And do these represent finalities which simply require acceptance? These are old questions but they are not antiquated. Biblical and historical studies undertaken without facing these questions may be highly useful but cannot solve our problems. It is surely unrealistic to assume, as the program prepared by Dr. Flew would suggest, that from such studies we can move without further consideration to a constructive statement which "would be accepted by all the churches."

We may distinguish roughly three conceptions of authority. First is the idea of a revelation which communicates knowledge, whether of ideas or of the will of God, and this in some direct and absolute fashion. Referring usually to the Bible, the concept may be extended to cover the idea of creeds as divinely determined statements of truth which become authoritative for believers. Second, there is the institutional, or ecclesiastical conception, the Roman Catholic Church being the outstanding representative. This has room, of course, for authoritative Scriptures and creeds, but the real seat of authority is the Church, to which God has given rule in matters of belief and conduct, and infallible guidance. The third rejects any external authority assuming absolute character, whether embodied in letter of Scripture, creedal statement, or ecclesiastical institution. All historical expressions and institutions are instrumental, valuable as that through which God speaks, themselves humanly conditioned and under the law of development. It would stress the authority of the living God, the significance

3rd How does this avoid subjectivism? When do we know we have the Spirit of God & when swayed by our own passions or emotions etc.

of the historical revelation whose supreme expression is Christ, whose message is known through the Scriptures, and whose embodiment and instrument are found in the historic Christian fellowship, with the conviction that the God thus revealed can be known by man through his Spirit.

These three divisions can be further reduced. While the first two represent broadly the Protestant-Catholic contrast in its traditional form, they agree in the assumption that there is some objective and fixed standard of the Christian faith, divinely determined and thus possessing absolute authority, from which would follow naturally that the problem of church unity was simply to discover this standard, determine what it says, and give it obedience. This is the assumption that lies back of most ecumenical discussion. The third position obviously does not yield any such result. It avoids the impasse to which the other position leads, whose adherents insist upon an absolute and objective standard but cannot agree as to what this is. While recognizing the centrality and finality of the revelation in Christ, it recognizes the necessarily relative character which belongs to every empirical expression of the same, emphasizing the work of the living God who is continually speaking to men through this revelation, who is indeed continually with men as living deed and word.

Obviously these varying views of authority will affect directly our use of materials of historical and biblical study, as well as our concept of the Church.

II. What Is Christianity?

But these ideas of authority are themselves contingent upon something more central. They rest back upon the conception of the nature of Christianity itself and represent corresponding differences at this point. All agree that Christianity is something divinely given, that in some distinctive and unique way God has here come to man. For the first view the central and constitutive element in Christianity is a supernatural revelation, or communication of truth, of teaching concerning that which man is to believe in doctrine, to receive as saving help, and to follow as the will of God. Commonly that means the Bible, the creeds of the undivided

Church or of a particular communion, or "the fundamentals of the faith", or some combination of these. As the first conception is doctrinal in its emphasis, the second is institutional, or ecclesiastical. In the Roman Church this takes a legalistic form, that is, the Church is a definitely prescribed and authoritatively established institution. Doctrine, salvation, the right way of life, all are recognized as vital, but all come under the direction and control of this institution. The Church is Lehrinstitut, Heilsinstitut, Rechtsinstitut. Christianity is the Church. If the first view makes principal use of the category of doctrine and the second of institution, the third makes central the category of life. Christianity is a living movement. For this view, too, it is supernatural; it is the creation of God, the living God, redemptive, self-revealing, moving in history, whose supreme deed of revelation and redemption is not a doctrine but a life, that of Jesus Christ, at once historical figure and continuing spiritual power. Here, too, the Church as the historic fellowship holds an essential place, but the Church is conceived vitally and organically, rather than institutionally and legally. It is a fellowship which is at once a communion with God and a communion among men. The revelation is indeed objectively given in Christ, but each generation must apprehend and interpret its meaning. The word that God speaks to men cannot be set forth in a final theological formula or identified with words of Scripture; it must come anew to each man and to each generation as from the living God. And the decisive factor is always the reality of a life which is divine in quality and source, springing from the vision of God as seen in Christ, constantly renewed by God through his Spirit, having its continuing expression in the historic Christian fellowship. The essential nature of Christianity is thus found in the place where God is present.

Brunner
where does this differ from Reform doctrine? Because when Spirit bear witness that such is the word, men must hold?

These views once more reduce to two and bear obviously upon the problem of authority. In the first case authority is more intellectual, in the second more political; but they agree in seeking some objectively apprehensible divine factum. In the third conception the divine is to be found in historic deed and living

How can holders of these 3 views ever be brought together? Must Dr. Ralls 3rd view prevail in order to have a truly ecumenical movement?

movement, objectively real, indeed, alike as historic event, as definite faith, and as ongoing life, but never to be apprehended or possessed except as the continuing word and work of the living God. Hence ultimate authority can never be assigned to any one empirical expression viewed as unchanging and absolute embodiment of the divine. ~~[illegible]~~ Bible ?

III. The Nature of God and His Relation to the World

One step more must be taken in tracing back the concepts determining the varyind ideas of the Church. We must consider the doctrine in which all Christian thinking finds its regulative center, that of God. Here, too, the problem can be sketched only in outline. Four viewpoints may be broadly distinguished in the movement of Hebrew-Christian thought. 1. There is the prophetic concept of God, perhaps best characterized by the Old Testament phrase, the living God. The conception is personal, ethical, and strongly teleological. Here is the God who acts, who carries out his creative and redemptive ends, a God of transcendent holiness and power, yet working in ethical-personal relations. In Jesus Christ the revelation of the character of this God, of his goal and his way with men, receives supreme expression. 2. Theology early felt the impetus of Greek philosophic thought moving it toward "the God of the philosophers," to use Pascal's phrase. Here thought centers in the idea of logos rather than of telos, or, one might say, in teleios rather than telos. God is the reason in which the world has its ground and unity. God is teleios, the perfect, the eternal and unchanging One, set sharply over against the corrupt and transitory world. Yet, side by side with this, lives the rather disparate prophetic concept, and place is found for the Christian elements of personal religion as well as for mystic contemplation and union. 3. Western theology showed a blending of the first and the second views in a God who, as Pringle-Pattison has remarked, was "a fusion of the primitive monarchical idea with Aristotle's conception of the eternal Thinker," though we must note, first, the difference which never admits of real fusion, and the emphasis on power at the expense of the ethical which the prophetic concept made so clear.

4. What we may call the "new theism" (still limiting ourselves to distinctively Christian thought) makes basic the personal-ethical-teleological viewpoint of the prophetic approach, combining with this the inescapable Greek interest in the unitary and rational. Here enter also other and more modern interests. From the new knowledge of nature comes the idea of a dynamic and developing world. The historical-social sciences suggest the need of finding a better way than that given by apocalypticism and other absolutisms of understanding how the personal-ethical God works in history and in relation with man.

It is when we raise this question as to the method of God with the world, and note the varying answers that correspond with these different ideas of God, that we see most clearly the bearing of the theological viewpoint upon the concept of the Church and related doctrines. How central this matter is in present-day discussion we all know. Questions of natural and supernatural, of the new emphasis on transcendence, of revelation and natural theology, of a Christian philosophy of history, of evolutionism and humanism in contrast with apocalypticism, of the function of the Church and the possible social hopes of Christian men, - these inter-related and conflicting ideas all enter in here. Broadly speaking, we may distinguish two viewpoints. Common to both is the concept of a God of transcendent wisdom and power and righteousness, and a world dependent on God and in need of redemption. But one group (corresponding roughly with those holding the second and third concepts of God) leans to a dualistic supernaturalism, to an absolutistic emphasis whether on a static perfection in the one case or an all-determining power in the other. The distinctly supernatural is found in a realm that is unconditioned by the human and finite, in that which stands over against man, or is given to man, in direct and absolute fashion. The questions of authority and the nature of Christianity and of the Church are approached from this standpoint. The essential elements of Christianity, whether found in Scripture, in a divinely established institution endowed with specified powers in teaching, salvation, and rule, in creeds secured through divine guidance, or in some

combination of these, mean in each case a divine action that is direct and decisive, infallible in its product, and standing over against what is finite and human and historically conditioned. Correspondingly authority is found in one or more of these divine acts. And in similar fashion the doctrine of the Church is determined.. With this dualistic-absolutistic viewpoint, it follows that the articuli stantis aut cadentis ecclesiae are to be sought at this same point of direct and absolute divine action issuing in an objective datum, either in terms of doctrine or of institution.

What this means in relation to ecumenical discussion is obvious. It is not simply that there is a given supernatural objectively present; but this given, since it comes by direct divine action, must be infallible and unchangeable. So Luther, looking across at Zwingli, writes on the table Hoc est meum corpus, sees in these words an impassible barrier, and declares to the Swiss reformer, "You are of another spirit." Similarly the conversations at Malines between Romanists and Anglo-Catholics, despite agreement on all other points of doctrine and order, come to an inevitable halt when the claim of papal supremacy and infallibility is raised. A like viewpoint is present in the insistence on phrases that stem from the formulations of the Nicene Creed, as at Edinburgh and Amsterdam, or in Karl Barth's insistence upon a pure Word of God which passes over into a particular type of traditional theology. Mutually contradictory, and as such apparently making unity impossible, the conflicting positions all root in this same general dualistic-absolutistic conception of God and his relation to man and the world.

The second position as regards the relation of God to the world roots in the viewpoint of prophetic religion. It is necessary, of course, to guard against reading into this old position our modern ideas of immanence, historical development, and human action. The supreme concern of Prophets and Apostles was with God, to assert the reality, the power, the gracious purpose, and the righteous will of Jehovah. The question of "how" was quite incidental, or wholly absent. In other words, their interest was religious, not philosophical or theological or,

in our modern sense, social. The rule of God was to come and God was to bring it, and the rest was with God, except that men should repent and believe. what?, whom?.

Yet to assert this is to state but one side. Their idea of God and the religious relation made a difference. Their God was neither abstract order, static perfection, nor sheer power and arbitrary sovereignty who, when the hour came, wrought his irresistible will without further concern. God was personal and ethical; he therefore dealt with men in personal and ethical relations, and thus the factor of the human and historical entered in. He was a God who carried out his purpose in time; history therefore had a meaning and Hebrew prophetism offered the first philosophy of history. Nor did he deal simply with individuals, whether in mystical isolation, as solitary searchers for truth, or as submissive subjects. He was concerned with the group, the people, the fellowship, with men in association in whose life, common as well as individual, his will was to be done and his rule of truth and faith, of justice and love, to be established.

The implications of all this, of the ethical, personal, and historical, were not considered nor its problems faced by either the older prophetism or early Christianity. That was especially true where apocalypticism formed the background and men were waiting for the clock of time to strike twelve. But it is just this concept of God, creative, redemptive, working in time, working with men in moral-personal and not merely sovereign-subject relation, that gives the basis for the expression of the second position as found in its modern form. Today we have to face these implications and their problems, and this need is enforced by modern and inescapable ideas of a dynamic and developing world, and of the significance of the historical, human, and social. It is not enough to say, God wills and God will perform. Yes, there is a will of God and God will give us the kingdom; there is a transcendent God of power and perfection. But his perfection is that of a dynamic and creative love, and his work is to be found, not in supposed absolutes of Church or creed or Scripture, but within the limitations of the empirical, of the human and historical.

Those who hold this viewpoint are at a disadvantage at such gatherings as

Edinburgh. They often keep silent, because the whole scheme of the agenda and the setting for discussion rest on the unconsicous but initial assumption of such absolutes whose discovery will offer the basis for agreement, and do not reach to the ultimate issues. They have, however, this marked advantage. They do not face the hopeless task of finding agreement among the discrepant "absolutes" which the historical movement has brought forth. They have one Absolute and that is God. They believe in a supreme revelation of this God in Jesus Christ. But they cannot view as absolute and unchanging any expression of this revelation in a given empirical form of doctrine or institution. Authority, whatever forms it may take in the secondary sense, will be found where the living God speaks to the discerning and obedient heart. Christians are those to whom God has thus spoken through Christ. Given a God who works in this manner, the Church must be found in a living, historically continuous fellowship, comprising those who have heard this word, who proclaim it, and who live by the Spirit of this God. It is obvious that from this standpoint there is hope for an ecumenical movement which shall be inclusive without being indefinite, and positive without being rigid and static.

Isn't this the Reform position?

So they must all come to his position, No. 3

In a paper which must be brief and whose aim it is to uncover basic issues and bring out underlying conflicts of position, it is almost inevitable that there should be an oversimplification of issues and a heightening of contrasts. It remains to suggest now that these sharp oppositions are being modified under the influence of modern thought and life. Let me refer, for example, to the movement of Anglo-Catholic thought in relation to so important a matter as that of authority. Consider the discussions of Madras of which Bendrik Kraemer was the center, and the articles in the first volume of the Madras reports with their suggestion alike of difference and of mutual approximation. In practice Karl Barth, as his Kirchliche Dogmatik shows, differs little from the older biblicism in his handling of Scripture as authority and from the older dogmatism in his conclusions; but in principle he makes revolutionary concessions as he distinguishes sharply between the Word, in which alone absolute authority inheres, and every empirical expression of the

same in the Church, in theologies and creeds, and in the Scripture itself. Modern theism has concerned itself with the human, the historical, and the developmental, with the necessary implications of a religion that is personal and a God who is ethical, and with the meaning of immanence. Yet in this same group there is a strongly growing appreciation, of the transcendent in God, of a church which is a divine creation and not a mere human association, of the significance of the historical tradition, and of the need of finding what is unique in Christianity in something positive and permanently valid, however conditioned its empirical-historical expressions may be. It is the value of ecumenical conference to bring a better understanding of the conflicting points of view. It is the function of work like ours to bring out clearly the underlying differences which are often concealed in conference, to see where movements may lead which are already under way, and to suggest the possibilities in the way either of further advance toward theological agreement or of a possible unity amid such diversities.

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